

WINDHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION  
WILLIMANTIC, CONNECTICUT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES  
September 24, 2014

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

BOARD ABSENT: Mr. Quamme

ADMINISTRATION

PRESENT: Superintendent Dr. Garcia; Deputy Superintendent Dr. Gasper; Directors Mrs. Banks, Mr. Cunha and Mr. Johnson

STUDENT

REPRESENTATIVES: Kathy Oyola and Nathan Cusson

OTHERS PRESENT: general public; staff; administrators; news media

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Mrs. Lambert called the September 24, 2014, Board of Education Workshop meeting to order at 7:06 P.M. in the Windham High School Library Media Center.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

ACTION ITEMS

Mr. French asked that the minutes be approved individually because he was not present at every meeting.

Approval of minutes (Ref. 1, 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 1E)

June 11, 2014 business meeting (Ref. 1)

**Motion by Mr. French, seconded by Dr. Gomez, that the Board approve the June 11, 2014, business meeting minutes.**

**Motion is unanimously approved.**

June 25, 2014 workshop meeting (Ref. 1A)

**Motion by Mr. Montalvo, seconded by Mr. French, that the Board approve the June 25, 2014, workshop meeting minutes.**

**Motion is unanimously approved.**

June 18, 2014 special meeting (Ref. 1B)

**Motion by Mr. French, seconded by Mrs. Osuba, that the Board approve the June 18, 2014, special meeting minutes.**

**On the motion: Aye:** Mrs. Lambert, Mr. Desaulniers, Mr. Montalvo, Mrs. Osuba, Dr. Sewall, Mr. French, Mr. Kalajian

**Nay:** No one

**Abstained:** Dr. Gomez

July 2, 2014 special meeting (Ref. 1C)

**Motion by Mr. French, seconded by Mrs. Lambert, that the Board approve the July 2, 2014, special meeting minutes (Ref. 1C).**

**On the motion: Aye:** Mrs. Lambert, Mr. Desaulniers, Mr. Montalvo, Dr. Sewall, Mr. French, Mr. Kalajian  
**Nay:** No one  
**Abstained:** Mrs. Osuba, Dr. Gomez

July 8, 2014 special meeting (Ref. 1D)

**Motion by Dr. Sewall, seconded by Mr. Kalajian, that the Board approve the July 8, 2014, special meeting minutes (Ref. 1D).**

**On the motion: Aye:** Mrs. Lambert, Mr. Desaulniers, Mrs. Osuba, Dr. Sewall, Mr. Kalajian  
**Nay:** No one  
**Abstained:** Dr. Gomez, Mr. Montalvo, Mr. French

August 11, 2014 special meeting (Ref. 1E)

**Motion by Dr. Sewall, seconded by Mr. Kalajian, that the Board approve the August 11, 2014, special meeting minutes (Ref. 1E).**

**On the motion: Aye:** Mrs. Lambert, Mr. Desaulniers, Mr. Montalvo, Mrs. Osuba, Dr. Sewall, Mr. Kalajian, Mr. French  
**Nay:** No one  
**Abstained:** Dr. Gomez

All-Hazards School and Safety Plans for Sweeney School, Windham Center School, Windham Middle School, Windham High School, and Charles H. Barrows STEMS Academy (Ref. 2, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D)

Board members agreed to vote on the plans together.

**Motion of Mr. Montalvo, seconded by Dr. Sewall, that the Board of Education approve the All Hazards School and Safety Plans as presented for Sweeney School (Ref. 2), Windham Center School (Ref. 2A), Windham Middle School (Ref. 2B), Windham High School (Ref. 2C), and Windham Early Childhood Center (Ref. 2D).**

**The motion is unanimously approved.**

COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY PROVISION (CEP) OF THE HEALTHY HUNGER-FREE KIDS ACT OF 2010

This material is presented to the Board as informational. Mr. Volle explained that the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) program was piloted by the USDA in 2011 and is similar to Provision 2 providing all students with free breakfast and free lunch except for students attending Barrows. The CEP program will allow students to continue eating free breakfast and free lunch. The program will also reduce the necessary paperwork and administrative costs. Mr. Volle explained that currently under Provision 2, the district gets reimbursed 69% and under the CEP program, Windham qualifies to receive about 81% reimbursement with the additional revenue going to the food service department to offset the rise in costs of benefits, as well as costs of overhead and labor. Mr. Volle would like to move forward with the application process with the State of Connecticut. He answered questions from Board members regarding the program and its benefits.

The following two items were added to the agenda:

**Motion by Mrs. Osuba, seconded by Dr. Gomez, that the Board add the first reading of the revised transportation policy to the agenda.**

**Motion is unanimously approved.**

**Motion by Mrs. Osuba, seconded by Dr. Gomez, that the Board add approval of the Superintendent being allowed to renegotiate the M&J Bus Contract.**

**Motion is unanimously approved.**

Mrs. Osuba explained that when the Ad Hoc Policy Committee met this evening, transportation policy 3541 was reviewed and a number of changes to the policy are being recommended as a result of M&J being the sole provider of transportation in the district. Recommended changes follow: PreK students will all be bused throughout the district; the school-based Pre-K line item will be eliminated, and K-5 students will walk .5 miles (this remains the same); when the wording *superintendent of schools/director of finance and operations* is noted in the policy, *director of finance and operations* will be deleted because the superintendent is the sole person responsible; and under the Appeals Process, the transportation coordinator will be the sole person to handle transportation concerns in the district. The revised policy will be on the October 8th Board meeting agenda as an action item for approval.

**Motion by Dr. Sewall, seconded by Mrs. Osuba, that the Board agrees to have the Superintendent renegotiate the contract with M&J Bus Company.** This is to clarify the contract with the M&J Bus Company that M&J is now the only transportation carrier in the district.

**Motion is unanimously approved.**

Dr. Garcia thanked the community for supporting the education budget. Dr. Garcia also recognized Nathan Cusson, the student representative, who is in attendance at tonight's meeting. Kathy Oyola will attend the meeting following today's volleyball game.

#### WORKSHOP TOPIC

##### Common Core State Standard and NWEA

Dr. Garcia provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding the Common Core State Standard. She said that it is important to set clear, consistent expectations for all students, teachers and parents across the country. This prepares students for college and career. Previously, state standards varied from state to state; however, the Common Core enables collaboration among states. The Common Core State Standard will prepare students for the global world and to be prepared for success after graduation. Dr. Garcia said it is important to provide the best quality education for all students. There was discussion.

Mr. Mercier provided a PowerPoint presentation on NWEA MAP. Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) are computer adaptive assessments that reveal precisely which academic skills and concepts the student has acquired and what the student is ready to learn next. The three versions of MAP by grade level are aligned to all state content standards. NWEA Research conducts regular linking studies to ensure that performance on MAP is interpretable according to the specific performance standards of every state. There are many reports available through NWEA that can be accessed to analyze student data.

#### PUBLIC DIALOGUE

Mary Gallucci, Willimantic, said that she received the Connecticut Against Common Core literature and a campaign flyer for John French when she attended her child's open house at Barrows. She said that she doesn't mind getting political literature and information flyers but didn't find it appropriate to receive these outside a school during open house. Ms. Gallucci said that she is a bit daunted by all of the assessments. She attended the hearing at the State Board of Education on Common Core last spring and she does have problems with Common Core. Ms. Gallucci said that opt out information was not provided. She said that

some assessments and benchmarks are fine if students were robots. She said that there are standards and school was always about forming the human person. She felt that the whole idea is a boon to text book and test companies. Ms. Gallucci said that there are some things that students have to memorize, and she doesn't think that a child should have to explain how they arrive at every answer. She said that the human brain acquires many things over time, and elementary students should sing for the joy of it. She said that they are learning while they sing and while they finger paint and not everything is reducible to something that has to be explained. She said that it seems that people are writing for a computer program and not for a child. Ms. Gallucci said that it has to be said loud and clear what does and doesn't work and what might be damaging to our children.

Mary Lou DeVivo, Willimantic, said that she believes that children at Barrows should get free breakfast and free lunch like students at the other schools. She hopes that the district is composting its garbage. She said that this was one of the best workshops as she didn't know much about Common Core. Mrs. DeVivo said that there are books that will explain it for parents who want to find out about it.

Brenda Martinez, New London, said that Common Core is being sold as a solution for disparity and each state already has standards but there are huge disparities among districts. She said that we have to think about other variables that aren't standard related, and it is necessary to be careful about what the end goals are because there is already something similar but in a smaller version.

Dale Duffany, Killingly, said that students are expected to have speed and accuracy but he said there seems to be a disconnect with what was presented on the screen tonight. He said that he understands that Common Core Standards can't be changed. He asked why SBAC was not discussed as part of the presentation. He also said that he thought that Common Core was being rolled out this year.

Dr. Garcia said that districts can't change the standards but can develop curriculum and lesson plans to follow the standards. She said that the Common Core will be discussed at other times and districts are in different phases of implementation. Dr. Garcia said that Windham is not ready to fully implement the Common Core and an analysis is being done in preparation for its full implementation in the district.

Dr. Sewall said that the state will be implementing the Smarter Balanced Assessment which is based on the Common Core.

Mrs. Lambert thanked everyone for their efforts to pass the budget. She thanked the WFT and AFT for the radio and newspaper ads and for the signs that were purchased, the Democratic Town Committee for making telephone calls, School Governance Council members for encouraging parents to vote, and Dr. Garcia for her efforts to be out in the community meeting with parents and community members. She congratulated Mr. O'Neill for the addition to his family. Mrs. Lambert said that she has received calls asking about a fundraiser, and there is a WMS PTO fundraiser in progress. She thanked Kathy Oyola and Nathan Cusson for attending tonight's meeting. Mrs. Lambert thanked WFT, WAA and Willimantic Waste for their support of Dr. Garcia's reception. Funding was done by community sponsors and none of the expenses were from the local budget. United Way staff members attended and did a wall of aspirations for the district. The event was well attended.

**Motion by Mr. French, seconded by Dr. Sewall, that the Board enter into executive session for the discussion of exempt documents pertaining to confidential attorney-client communications at 8:51 P.M.**

**Motion is unanimously approved.**

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

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

OTHERS PRESENT Superintendent Dr. Garcia

REGULAR SESSION RECONVENED

Mrs. Lambert reconvened regular session at 10:24 P.M.

ADJOURNMENT

**Motion by Mr. Montalvo, seconded by Mr. French, that the Board adjourn its meeting at 10:24 P.M.**

**Motion is unanimously approved.**

Respectfully submitted,

Juan Montalvo, Secretary