

WINDHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION
WILLIMANTIC, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES
(held in Place of September 26, 2012, Regular Workshop Meeting)
September 26, 2012

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

BOARD ABSENT: Mr. Desaulniers

ADMINISTRATION

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

STUDENT

REPRESENTATIVES: No one

OTHERS PRESENT: Special Master Dr. Adamowski; Intern to Special Master Ms. Gabrielle Ramos, general public; staff; administrators; news media

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Dr. Sewall called the September 26, 2012, Board of Education special business meeting, held in place of the regular workshop meeting, to order at 7:00 P.M. in the Windham High School Library Media Center.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mrs. Lambert led the Board and the public in the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

CONSENT AGENDA

The following minutes were approved as submitted:

Board of Education August 22, 2012, regular business meeting minutes (Ref. 1)

Board of Education September 5, 2012, special workshop meeting minutes (held in place of September 12, 2012, regular business meeting) (Ref. 2)

PUBLIC DIALOGUE

Lorraine McDevitt, Willimantic, spoke as a representative for the Windham Regional Arts Council. Each year the Council sponsors Windham third grade students to attend the symphony at the Hyde Center in Woodstock and fifth grade students to attend the opera. Mrs. McDevitt has been arranging transportation but this year the elementary secretaries will take care of making arrangements for both the third and fifth grade students. Last year there was a scheduling miscommunication at the Middle School which created a problem and the fifth grade students were not able to attend the opera even though the buses were waiting to transport them. This year the third grade will attend on April 8 and the fifth grade will attend on May 14. On behalf of the Board, Dr. Sewall expressed appreciation to the Arts Council for supporting Windham students to attend these events.

Mary Gallucci, Willimantic, said that it is offensive to continue to speak of Natchaug School as swing space. The school has been neglected and needs more than a new roof. She asked if the job of renovating the schools was being given to Friar Associates and why it is not being sent out to bid. She said that she is

still waiting to see the official report on state of the building. Ms. Gallucci also asked to see the parent survey results for Mandarin vs. Latin. She also asked who the gifted and talented teacher is for Natchaug and Sweeney. Mrs. Lambert responded that it is Mrs. Tomanelli. She asked how SIG funds, which are to be used to supplement the district curriculum at Natchaug, are being allocated for the school, and she asked to see a line item breakdown for each dollar spent from the School Improvement Grant this year at Natchaug. She said that there is no plan to hire a new principal for Natchaug when the principal leaves in January. She asked that now that there is talk about converting schools to house kindergarten through grade eight students, what does this mean for the recently hired Middle School principal and the programs at the Middle School. She asked for an explanation of the process regarding the presentation of options for High School students and why some parents are invited to these meetings and others aren't. She said that the level of neglect at Natchaug School is growing and the magnet school should just go to Natchaug School and make it a district school which would save money and provide a school for Natchaug students because they have been ill served. Ms. Ortiz said interviews have taken place for the Associate Principal position and the process is continuing with a reposting of the position. Ms. Tinker said that no one has been hired for the renovations project which will require a selection bid process and an RFP. Dr. Adamowski said that he is charged with developing regional opportunities for Windham students while the district improves its performance and he met with a group of parents last spring at their request. Next year, he said, more choices will be available and parents will be informed in a more organized manner.

Mary Lou DeVivo, Willimantic, spoke about the parking problem at Kramer and said that people are parking in the fire lanes. She said that a solution needs to be found because it is a safety issue. Ms. Ortiz said that she has e-mailed the Town Manager and will be speaking with the Police Chief about the problem.

Mark Phelps, Windham, said that there are contributing factors to successful learning. He addressed busing and early school starting times. He said there is a bus run that begins at 5:51 AM. Windham Technical High School has an early start time and he suggested having a separate bus do the Windham Technical High School route in the Windhams and possibly across the river. He said, also, there is not enough time prior to the start of school to feed all of the Middle School students breakfast. He also commented on the physical education programs at Windham Middle School and the elementary schools which takes place only one day a week. He also commented that the accelerated social studies program at Windham Middle School meets only three days a week and there are no books, very little materials and a first year teacher in the classroom. Ms. Ortiz said that Mr. Nelson will contact M&J about the busing schedule and Mr. Koschmieder has been working with Mr. Olkowski regarding breakfast waves at Middle School.

REPORTS

Superintendent's Report

Food Services Program

Ms. Ortiz gave Board members an article that was published in the *Norwich Bulletin* about Windham Public Schools teaming up with Our Acres Farm in Lebanon to use fresh local food in school meals. Mr. Koschmieder reported that, with the implementation of Provision 2, he has seen a remarkable increase in breakfast and lunch counts. Due to the changes, he and his staff continue to work so that breakfast and lunch times run smoother. Now with the services of the Food Corp worker assigned to the district, there is an opportunity to provide students with more nutrition education. The food services program, which is self-funding, has a fund balance which is being used to replace aging equipment and keep it maintained so it will last longer. Mr. Koschmieder reported that the High School supper program has grown from eleven participants on the first evening to eighty-one participants as of last night. He expects an increase in the number of dinners served with more after-school programs and activities starting in the next couple of

weeks at the High School. There was some discussion about the early lunch wave at the Middle School, and Mr. Koschmieder answered questions throughout his report.

Reading Program

Ms. Barker-Jones reported that all of the materials for the Imagine It! reading program were purchased and implementation is taking place according to schedule. Staff professional development for the program is in progress and invoices are being finalized with the Town.

Assessment

Ms. Barker-Jones also reported on the Northwest Evaluation Association's (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) which is being purchased through Special Master Funds, as part of Goal 4, Strategy 3, of the SOP, which requires the creation of a district assessment system. This assessment system has reading, writing and math sections and will provide a benchmark assessment system for the district. The tests adapt to each student's level and are taken online. This year tests will be given in October, approximately at the end of January, and in May to students in grades three through ten. Data will provide the district with comprehensive results on students' performance in all three areas. There was discussion and questions were answered.

Ms. Ortiz reported that Ms. England and she attended a meeting regarding the district's application for Alliance district funding. She informed the Board that Windham's Alliance application has been approved and is considered in category four which is the best category to reach regarding presentation of information. She thanked Ms. England for putting the application together this past summer with data information received through Ms. Barker-Jones' department and support from Ms. Brunet.

Committee Reports

Finance and Audit Committee

Ms. Tinker reported that the committee has received the 2010-2011 audit. The audit recommends two areas for follow up and policies will be developed by the committee to address these. Ms. Tinker reported that she served on the committee with a representative from the Board of Finance and the Town Council to choose the next auditor. The committee interviewed applicants and chose a firm which has been approved by the Town. This firm will meet with the Board of Education's Finance and Audit committee to work with members regarding possible additional reports requested by the Board of Education. Also, the Town Council may bring in a firm to look at efficiency in the Town's area of finance, and Ms. Tinker suggested that the Board of Education may want to also take part in this assessment.

School Planning and Design Committee

Mrs. Lambert reported that the committee will meet on Wednesday at 6:30 PM. Executive summaries of building conditions have been received from Friar Associates and have been forwarded to Board members.

Executive Committee

Dr. Sewall reported that a future agenda item is a draft evaluation plan for the superintendent.

Ad hoc Transportation Policy Committee

Mr. French reported that the committee has not met but he will try to schedule a meeting for next Thursday.

ACTION ITEMS

Strategic Operating Plan 2012-2013 District Goals (Ref. 3)

Motion of Ms. Tinker, seconded by Mr. Adamo, that the Board of Education approve the Strategic Operating Plan 2012-2013 District Goals as presented.

Ms. Ortiz explained that Goal 1, Strategy 8, and Goal 6, Strategy 6, are on hold until year two, based on recommendations from the Board at the retreat held in July.

On the motion: Motion is unanimously approved.

Natchaug Roof Replacement (Ref. 4)

Motion of Mrs. Collins, seconded by Mrs. Osuba, that the Board of Education approve the filing of the ED 049 and filing of an emergency construction project request with the State of Connecticut to replace the Natchaug roof based upon the Gale Associates report. There was much discussion regarding replacement of the Natchaug roof and options for Natchaug School. It was explained that this action is the first step in the decision making process for the replacement of the Natchaug roof and will also need to go before the Board of Finance and Town Council with a decision made about bringing the request for local funding of 20% to a Town meeting.

On the motion: Aye, Mrs. Collins, Mrs. Osuba, Dr. Switchenko, Mrs. Lambert, Ms. Tinker Nay, Mr. Adamo, Mr. French

Motion passes: 5-2

2012-2013 School Calendar Revision (Ref. 5)

Motion of Mrs. Collins, seconded by Mrs. Lambert, that the Board of Education approve the following revision to the 2012-2013 school calendar: change October 25, 2012, to a two-hour early release day for students so that staff can participate in professional development. October 25, 2012, is presently a one-hour release day for students. This revision to the calendar is being requested so that staff members have the allotted time to participate in training prior to implementing the NWEA Benchmark Assessment System which was previously reported on earlier at this meeting by Ms. Barker-Jones.

On the motion: Motion is unanimously approved.

Naming of Magnet School (Ref. 6)

Motion of Mrs. Collins, seconded by Mrs. Lambert, that the Board of Education recommend a name to the Windham Town Council for the magnet school being constructed on Tuckie Road.

On the motion: Motion is unanimously approved.

Dr. Sewall explained that the Town Council has asked for the submission of proposed names from the public for the Magnet School, and the proposed name recommended by Administration is *Eastern Connecticut STEM Academy*. There was some discussion on this topic.

Motion of Mr. French, seconded by Dr. Switchenko, that the Board of Education recommend *Eastern Connecticut STEM Academy* as the name for the magnet school being constructed on Tuckie Road to the Windham Town Council. There was continued discussion and *Windham Regional STEM Academy* was suggested as the name for submittal.

Motion was amended by Mr. French, and amended motion seconded by Dr. Switchenko, that the Board of Education recommend *Windham Regional STEM Academy* as the name for the magnet school being constructed on Tuckie Road to the Windham Town Council.

On the motion: Motion is unanimously approved.

Approval of appointments

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

1. Carolyn Comstock-Montgomery to the position of Gifted and Talented Teacher at Windham Center School and North Windham School effective September 6, 2012.
2. Deborah Toomey to the position of Grade 4 Teacher at Natchaug School effective August 23, 2012.
3. Ashley Yezuita to the position of Grade 5 Teacher at Windham Center School effective September 10, 2012.
4. Brandy Bunnell to the position of Data Facilitator at Windham High School effective September 5, 2012.
5. Ana Nascimento to the position of Guidance Counselor at Windham High School effective September 4, 2012.
6. Susan Round to the position of Instructional Consultant at North Windham School effective September 17, 2012.

Mrs. Lambert requested that she would like positions noted as being new or replacement positions.

On the motion: Motion is unanimously approved.

Special Master's Report

Dr. Adamowski reported that Superintendent Ortiz and he developed a set of recommended workshop topics for the year after reviewing the SOP. These will be reviewed with the Board Chair and then brought forward to the full Board for adoption. The Assessment Plan is an important topic and will be the focus of the next workshop. Dr. Adamowski reported that the State responded very favorably to the district's Alliance application which has been placed in the best category. One of the requirements of the grant is that the district provide a portion of the grant to a focus school, which is Windham Middle School. Interventions at the Middle School will include work with the redesign specifications of the school. This will be a workshop topic this year. Additional workshop topics will include the mid-year review of the Superintendent, as well as workshops focused on the budget.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr. Adamo, seconded by Mrs. Lambert, that the Board of Education adjourn its meeting at 9:25 PM.

On the motion: Motion is unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. Luz Osuba, Secretary