

WINDHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES
WILLIMANTIC, CONNECTICUT
May 13, 2009

BOARD PRESENT: Chair Mr. Folan, Mr. Adamo, Dr. Switchenko, Mr. Doyle, Mrs. Haney, Mrs. Collins,
Mr. Clements, Mr. Diaz

BOARD ABSENT: Vice-chair Mrs. Rayhall

ADMINISTRATION

PRESENT: Superintendent Mrs. Fuller, Directors Mrs. Banks and Mr. Nelson

REPRESENTATIVES

PRESENT: Student Council – Celia Poirier
Columbia – No one

OTHERS PRESENT: Administrators, staff, general public, news media

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Mr. Folan called the May 13, 2009, Board of Education meeting to order at 7:05 P.M., in conference room one (room 223), 2nd floor, Kramer School.

On behalf of fellow Board members, Mr. Folan thanked the community for passing the budget.

MINUTES - April 22, 2009, Regular Board of Education Meeting (Ref. 1)

(185) Motion of Mr. Adamo, seconded by Dr. Switchenko, that the Board of Education approve the April 22, 2009, Regular Board of Education meeting minutes, Reference 1.

On the motion: Aye: Mr. Folan, Mr. Adamo, Mr. Clements, Dr. Switchenko, Mrs. Collins, Mr. Doyle,
Mr. Diaz

Nay: No one

Abstained: Mrs. Haney

The motion passes: 7-0-1

PRESENTATIONS

Windham High School Engineering Team (re-scheduled to June 10, 2009, meeting)

Windham High School Student Philosopher

Celia Poirier and Hayley Dunnack presented Board members with copies of the 2009 *Student Philosopher*. Celia read the following excerpts: *Dedication to Barack Obama* and *Prologue, Look at Life* by Alex Fernandez, and *Lost* by Zoe Allard. Hayley read *Ticks* by Caithlyn Sanchez, and the *Epilogue, When I Am Gone*, by Desiree Perry. They thanked the Board members for their continued support of the *Student Philosopher* and Board members thanked Celia and Hayley, as well as everyone who worked on and contributed to the award-winning publication filled with an outstanding collection of literary pieces. The *Philosopher's* advisor, Mr. William Skoog, was also thanked for his efforts.

Order of agenda changed.

STUDENT COUNCIL

Celia Poirier reported that Student Council members are finalizing plans for the May 19th Leadership Conference at the Eastern Connecticut State University Community Center. There will be six student workshops revolving around this year's theme, *culture*. Professor Olson, from the University of

Connecticut, will be the keynote speaker. Also, class elections facilitated by Student Council are planned for June.

CITIZENS/DELEGATIONS

Beth Martin Shashok, Willimantic, spoke about her fears concerning school safety. She would like to see a more comprehensive program than PBS being used to address the basic needs of all students. She supports metal detectors and having school-based officers.

Diane Ayer, Willimantic, read a letter from her daughter, Julia Ayer, in grade six, who could not attend tonight's meeting, against students wearing school uniforms.

Diane Ayer, Willimantic, spoke about her concerns regarding school safety and the school uniform policy. She would like to have students and staff wear identification tags and asked about having a uniform policy for the adults in the building, as well. She felt that the uniform policy is an unrealistic mandate for families and students will test its enforcement. Time spent enforcing the policy could be better spent on other areas. She asked how the uniforms will be paid for if a family could not afford to purchase them. Ms. Ayer also thought that the effectiveness of PBS should be reviewed.

Pat Calvo, Willimantic, fully supports the school uniform policy and said that it will be a huge equalizer and change the focus of the school. She felt that the cost of clothing children would be much less for families.

Luz Osuba, Willimantic, said that she is in favor of school uniforms. She felt that uniforms will promote a better learning environment so that students can focus on their school work and their socio economic differences will be equalized. Pride, unity and commitment in school will increase and students will take their studies more seriously. She felt that the presentation that the school gave was well organized.

Elizabeth Espitia, Willimantic, works with students at Windham Middle School and supports school uniforms. By having this policy, parents won't be pressured by students to buy the most expensive clothes. Former Middle School students who attend Windham Technical High School say that wearing uniforms takes the pressure off of them and they can concentrate on their school studies.

SUMMARY ACTION

Personnel Action (Ref. 2)

(186) Motion of Mrs. Haney, seconded by Mr. Doyle, that the Board of Education approve Reference 2: Resignations

- Jennifer Brooks, Special Education Teacher/Sweeney School effective May 6, 2009.
- Sue Gardner, Reading/Language Arts Consultant/Windham Middle School effective May 31, 2009 for the purpose of retirement.
- David Erhart, Special Education Teacher/Windham Middle School effective June 30, 2009.
- Lianne Soucy, Grade 4 Teacher/Sweeney School effective June 30, 2009.
- Whitney Peterson, Special Education Paraprofessional/North Windham School effective June 11, 2009.
- Mary Ann Smith, General Cafeteria Worker/Windham Middle School effective April 28, 2009.
- Renee Murphy, Administrative Assistant/Special Services effective August 31, 2009 for the purpose of retirement.
- Carol Leary, Secretary III/Sweeney School effective August 1, 2009 for the purpose of retirement.

Leaves of Absence

- Rebecca Martin, Special Education Teacher/Sweeney School, childbearing/childrearing leave of absence effective approximately August 24, 2009 through September 30, 2009.
- Daniel Piccione, Math Teacher/Windham High School, personal leave of absence June 8, 2009 through June 23, 2009.
- Sydney Gilbey, Computer Teacher/Windham Middle School, medical leave of absence effective April 27, 2009 through June 23, 2009.

Mrs. Leary and Mrs. Murphy were commended for their years of service.

On the motion: Aye, 8-0; unanimous.

COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Adamo extended an invitation to Board members to attend the May 26, 2009, annual EASTCONN meeting at the Capitol Theater on Main Street.

Return to order of agenda.

ACTION ITEMS

Student Uniform Policy (Ref. 3)

Mr. Piacentini reviewed the second draft student uniform policy. He also explained the process that Middle School administration and staff followed to research the concept of school uniforms, inform parents, get feedback and then develop a proposed policy.

(187) Motion of Mr. Doyle, seconded by Dr. Switchenko, that the Board of Education approve the Windham Middle School Student Uniform policy draft #2. Mr. Doyle said that he supports this policy because it is building driven.

On the motion: Aye, 8-0; unanimous

Job Descriptions (Ref. 4)

(188) Motion of Mr. Clements, seconded by Mrs. Collins, that the Board of Education approve the following job descriptions, with the addition of organizing the election of officers added to the Middle School Student Council advisor job description: Windham Middle School extra-curricular positions as follows: drama coach, jazz/marching band, National Junior Honor Society advisor, Student Council advisor, and yearbook advisor; as well as secretary I, secretary II, and non-certified librarian. The secretary III job description has been removed for further review. Ms. Negroñ will make the addition to the Middle School Student Council advisor job description. Mrs. Banks answered a question regarding the non-certified librarian job description.

On the motion: Aye, 8-0; unanimous

REPORTS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

Discipline Report (Ref. 5)

This report, as submitted by Mr. Forman, is for Board members' information. Mrs. Collins indicated that out-of-school suspensions are not effective and students should have a place to go to do school work when suspended.

Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAO) Results for English Language Learners (ELLs) (Ref. 6)

This report, as submitted by Dr. Olezza, is for Board members' information. There was no discussion.

Physical Education Research (Ref. 7)

This packet of material, compiled by Mrs. Switchenko, was reviewed by Student Services Committee members and is for Board members' information. The information shows that physical education activities directly correlate to student success.

Curriculum Committees (Ref. 8)

Summaries of work done this year by the Literacy, Numeracy, Science, and Social Studies curriculum committees are for Board members' information.

Financial Statements (April 2009): These will be included on the May 27, 2009, Board of Education agenda.

Announcements/Information (Ref. 9)

There were no comments.

Board of Education

Subcommittee Reports:

Magnet School: Mrs. Collins reported that the land appraisals have been completed and the Town attorney is in negotiations with the land owners. She reviewed the process that the committee must follow to purchase the land. Mrs. Haney reported that the committee is working on the educational specifications and the hiring of an educational program consultant.

Districtwide PTO: Mrs. Haney reported that the committee discussed fundraising plans for the reading program the committee would like to implement throughout the district. Fundraiser activities for the district playscapes were also discussed.

Student Services: Mrs. Collins reported that the committee reviewed the student uniform policy and the policy to have a student representative sit on the Board of Education; Mrs. Switchenko and Mr. Franchi presented data and the need for more physical activity; and committee members reviewed discipline data. As an informational item, EASTCONN is looking into funding a charter school for prek through k.

Policy/Planning: Mrs. Collins reported that the staff attendance policy, the uniform policy, and the defibrillator policy were reviewed.

EASTCONN: Mr. Adamo reported that representatives from CAFE presented EASTCONN with two awards. The following also took place at the meeting: reports were given by EA Aschenbrenner (early childhood), Jim Huggins (language arts and science curriculum) and Executive Director Paula Colen; a tuition report, a financial report and a budget draft for 2009-2010 were presented; updates were presented on Head Start and renovation plans for the Hampton building; the audit firm was approved; the roof at Commerce Drive needs repair; and work on revising the educational technology plan is underway.

Facilities/Maintenance: Mrs. Fuller reported that the following were discussed: playground conditions, Kramer fire repairs, lavatory conditions at the high school, and the call back process.

Sonnet subcommittee: Mr. Clements read the following sonnet written by him into the record:

Doreen Fuller, One Year in Windham, May 13, 2009:

*Some years ago, when asked, "How big are you?" you'd throw
Your smooth arms wide. "So big," you'd say. How bright
You were, at two or three to know that reach tops height
In every game that's worth a player's time. You grew,*

*You learned new games, new moves, did not forget,
Pickup or playoff, to look across, not up or down,
To level in your mind each field. Another town?
Another team? Your play remained the same. The net,*

*The ball, the lines kept clear. And still today the liberty
That's refereed is yours, and all your moves
Look fresh, and every team improves.
Lucky those with lockers near enough to see*

*Your prep, share practice time, and copy your approach
Scoreboards are sideline entertainment. Key the player coach.*

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Doyle informed Board members that the Budget and Finance Committee will move its meeting from May 19 to May 26, 2009.

CITIZENS/DELEGATIONS

There were none.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

(189)Motion of Mr. Adamo, seconded by Dr. Switchenko, that the Board enter into executive session at 7:58 P.M., for the discussion of exempt documents pertaining to bargaining unit negotiations.

On the motion: Aye, 8-0, unanimous.

BOARD PRESENT: Chair Mr. Folan, Mr. Adamo, Dr. Switchenko, Mrs. Haney, Mrs. Collins, Mr. Clements, Mr. Doyle, Mr. Diaz

ADMINISTRATION

PRESENT: Superintendent Mrs. Fuller, Directors Mrs. Banks and Mr. Nelson

REGULAR SESSION RECONVENES

Mr. Folan reconvened regular session at 8:20 P.M.

(190)Motion of Mr. Clements, seconded by Dr. Switchenko, that the Board add the contractual agreement with the Windham Federation of School Nurses to the agenda.

On the motion: Aye, 8-0, unanimous.

(191)Motion of Mr. Clements, seconded by Dr. Switchenko, that the Board of Education approve the contractual agreement with the Windham Federation of School Nurses.

On the motion: Aye, 8-0, unanimous.

ADJOURNMENT

(192)Motion by Mr. Adamo, seconded by Mr. Diaz, that the Board adjourn its meeting at 8:20 P.M.

On the motion: Aye, 8-0; unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

John Adamo, Secretary