

WINDHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION
WILLIMANTIC, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF EDUCATION WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 23, 2016

BOARD PRESENT: Chair Mrs. Osuba, Vice-chair Dr. Sewall, Secretary Dr. Gomez, Mr. Kalajian, Mrs. Lambert, Mr. Montalvo, Mr. French, Mr. Flores-Alvarez

BOARD ABSENT: Mr. Quamme

ADMINISTRATION

PRESENT: Superintendent Patricia Garcia, Interim Assistant Superintendent Mr. Chaffin, Interim Assistant Superintendent Dr. Hebert, Directors: Ms. Beghetto, Ms. Markey and Mr. Johnson

STUDENT

REPRESENTATIVES: None

OTHERS PRESENT: General public, staff, administrators, news media

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Mrs. Osuba called the March 23, 2016 Board of Education meeting to order at 7:05 P.M. in the Windham High School Library Media Center.

PLEDGE OF ALLIEGIANCE

Mr. Flores-Alvarez led the Board and the Public in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

WORKSHOP TOPIC

Connecticut Next Generation Accountability System

Dr. Garcia and Mr. Weathers gave a presentation to the Board regarding the new Connecticut Next Generation Accountability System. In the late summer of 2015, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) had its Next Generation Accountability System approved by the U.S. Department of Education as part of the waiver requirements to NCLB. This accountability system is more comprehensive using multiple measures including those not tied to traditional testing measures such as arts courses, participation, chronic absenteeism, and graduation rates. In all, there are twelve indicators that are used with some being specific to certain grade levels like high school grades. Those indicators include: performance in student achievement, student performance growth (measured next year), participation, chronic absenteeism, college and career readiness participation and pass rates, 4 year graduation rates and 6 years high needs student graduation rates, on-track for graduation rates for 9th grade students, arts course participation and physical education test participation and pass rates. This system allows for schools to plan for student improvement in multiple ways.

Windham's Accountability Index score was the highest in DRG I and outperformed two districts in DRG H. The district received a letter of commendation from CSDE for its participation rates. Windham has no Turnaround Schools in the district. Last year, there were three. Windham High School and Windham Middle School are Focus Schools for ELA. All schools outperformed the state average in at least one indicator or sub-indicator. Windham Center, North Windham, Sweeney, and Barrows were noted for outperforming the state average index for High Needs Students in at least one content discipline.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. James Flores, Windham, stated that in order to implement the ideas presented in the workshop, it is important that the budget is passed and he supports the Superintendent's Proposed Budget.

Erick Cruz Lopez, UCONN Student, asked if English Language Learners are tested. Dr. Garcia indicated they are tested but not included in the standards. He further inquired whether language plays a part in the placement of classes such as AP courses? Dr. Garcia said the District is striving to have equity in learning. He then asked what happens if parents of chronically absent students cannot come to meetings. It was pointed out that there are other methods available to them.

Bruno Kitar, Intern at Windham High School, was interested in knowing why focusing on absenteeism will help with the performance on other indicators. Mrs. Osoba said that the liaison program is designed to help keep the students in school. Dr. Garcia says that experiences that students have in school are very important in their achievement in higher education. He asked if steps are being taken to proactively address the social and emotional needs of the students rather than just address the problem when it arises? Dr. Garcia replied that there is a new grant that will have a component that addresses this concern. He inquired how the district through programming and school culture is promoting the students to stay in school and succeed and whether there is a way to reframe accountability to include support and safety for our students.

Joseline, UCONN student, inquired as to how many years are students required to take music and how many students have graduated from Windham and continued in music as a profession. Dr. Garcia said the students have to have arts and music credits and that the statistics regarding career choices were not available. Joseline would like an opportunity to discuss the Windham Music program.

ACTION ITEMS

Approval of Windham High School Field Trip Application (Ref. 1)

Motion of Dr. Sewall, seconded by Mr. Kalajian that the Board of Education approve the Windham High School VEX Robotic Team Field Trip to Kentucky. Dr. Garcia recommended that the Board approve the Windham VEX team field trip. Mrs. Lambert asked whether there would be funding available for other students when they go to major competitions. Dr. Garcia said at this particular time there is no protocol but there is money in the budget to cover the expense of this trip. She indicated that a protocol will be put in place. Mrs. Osoba said she agreed that there needs to be a policy and students should be active in the fundraising. Mr. Kalajian said this is a great opportunity to create a system for fundraising so it is equitable for

all students who have the opportunity to participate in this type of field trip. Dr. Garcia said that the District will support only Windham students.

The motion is unanimously approved.

Approval of Alliance Districts' School Buildings Grant (Ref. 2)

Motion of Dr. Sewall, seconded by Mr. Kalijian that the Board of Education approve submission of the Alliance Districts' School Buildings Grant application for the CT-DAS grant entitled *General Improvements to Alliance Districts' School Buildings*.

The motion is unanimously approved.

Acceptance of donation to Windham High School Music Department (Ref. 3)

Motion of Mr. Kalijian, seconded by Dr. Sewall that the Board of Education accept, with deep gratitude, the donation of \$1,500 to the Windham High School Band.

The motion is unanimously approved.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mrs. Lambert wanted to wish the band and TSA students good luck in their competitions. She met the Commissioner of Education this week. She noted that CABE requests that Board members ask their legislators to oppose House Bill 5175. It provides for a Town Board of Finance to add, delete or eliminate any line item they deem to be non-educational.

Dr. Sewall asked about the memo regarding the lottery being delayed until April and how does the funding affect the number of students are enrolled. Dr. Garcia said the State has asked that the District wait until funding is determined.

Mr. French asked Dr. Garcia to speak to the budget. Dr. Garcia said that the budget is lean and it is important to have it passed. She is concerned that the public will not support the budget. Mr. French asked if someone would like to reopen the discussion regarding the additional monies proposed at the last meeting. Mr. Kalajian spoke in favor having the budget go forward as amended as there is a large vocal group who feels they can be instrumental in getting the budget passed. Dr. Sewall said he also had reservations but feels the group needs to have an opportunity to support their position. Mrs. Lambert reiterated that it is incumbent upon the parent group to get the budget passed. Mrs. Osuba said that it was made very clear that it was up to them to get the votes.

Mr. French asked if the postponed meeting with the Teachers' Union members was properly posted. Mrs. Osuba indicated that it was never posted because it was cancelled before it was posted. Mr. French asked if there was any progress on the question of alleged illegal meeting. Mrs. Osuba said that the Attorney is still researching this matter.

Mr. Montalvo asked that the policy committee meeting time be changed to 6pm but Mr. Flores-Alvarez has a conflict for a later time. Mrs. Osuba asked that they coordinate a time that can work for both of them.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr. Gomez, seconded by Mr. Kalijian, that the Board adjourns its meeting at 9:05pm.