

WINDHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION
WILLIMANTIC, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES
June 22, 2016

BOARD PRESENT: Chair Mrs. Osuba, Vice-chair Dr. Sewall, Mrs. Lambert , Mr. Montalvo, Mr. French, Mr. Quamme

BOARD ABSENT: Secretary Dr. Gomez, Mr. Kalajian, Mr. Flores-Alvarez

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Superintendent Dr. Garcia, Interim Assistant Superintendent Mr. Chaffin, Directors: Ms. Beghetto, Ms. Markey

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES: None

OTHERS PRESENT: General public, staff administrators, news media

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Mrs. Osuba called the June 22, 2016 Board of Education special meeting to order at 7:04 P.M. in Media Center at Windham High School.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES

May 11, 2016, Business Meeting (Ref. 1)

May 25, 2016, Workshop Meeting (Ref. 1A)

June 8, 2016, Special Meeting (Ref. 1B)

The minutes for the May 11, 2016, May 25, 2016 and June 8, 2016 Board of Education Meetings were accepted as submitted.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mary Gallucci, Windham, expressed her sadness that the students who had planned to attend and speak to the Board regarding the uniform policy were not able to attend due to restrictions during summer repairs at the High School. She was pleased to see that the Board would be considering a change to the bullying policy which is very important and timely. She said she is excited about the renovation of the high school but is not in favor of the International Baccalaureate Program that has been suggested.

Alma Negron, Windham, spoke regarding the uniform policy. She indicated that the policy was addressed last year with a survey to the parents who made the decision. This policy should remain in place.

REPORTS

Superintendent's Report

Student Recognitions and Accomplishments

The North Windham Elementary School will receive a violin courtesy of Horns for Kids. The school is hoping to acquire more band and orchestral instruments for use.

Windham-ECO Participates in Annual Statewide Convening

Windham High School students, Acelin Perez and Natlia Perez, were part of a panel at the Connecticut Early College Opportunities Statewide Annual Convening at Naugatuck Valley community College. The students presented very well and the superintendent congratulates them.

Finalists in State Writing Competition on Human Rights

Windham students competed for the first time in the State of Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities writing competition. Sophomores, Ailin Cuevas and Emma Vining have qualified as finalists. This is a writing competition requiring students to prepare an essay on human rights issues. As finalists the students will attend an oral competition during which they will read their essays to a panel of judges.

Class of 2016 College Acceptances

An updated list of colleges that Windham graduates have been accepted was reviewed. Dr. Garcia noted that students were planning to attend institutes of higher learning both locally and outside of the state.

Summer Programs

There are several instructional programs operating this summer and are almost all beginning on July 5, 2016. The programs are K-3 Literacy, Extended School Year, Credit Restoration, ECO Enrichment, Algebra Readiness Camp, New Arrivals.

Summer Meals

This program is a tradition in the Windham Public School District. There will be ten different sites, three of which are schools with summer school programs. Last summer approximately 23,000 meals were served; the projection for this summer is 25,000 meals.

Education Matters

The Windham Public School District has hosted the local television program "Education Matters" since March, 2016. The season will wrap up in June and resume in September. Ms. Markey is the host of the show which airs once a week.

District and School Websites

The vendor providing the website services has been changed. Ms. Markey is heading the **initiative** to launch the new websites which will be more user-friendly.

Summer Curriculum Initiatives

Dr. Garcia acknowledged and congratulated the teachers who came back after school closed to work on the curriculum maps. There were 20-30 teachers that participated. ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies were represented.

ESOL, Bilingual and World Language

Dr. Garcia stated that the District is committed to reinstating the bilingual program. The consultants have finished their site visits and are compiling their report based on the data from classroom visits, focus groups and ESOL/Bilingual teachers, building administrators and long term English learners. Mrs. Lambert asked what the impact of the reduction in the budget would be for this

program. Dr. Garcia said that there will be many programs affected but, until there is a final number, it is impossible to know what the final impact will be and that instruction is the priority. The Superintendent is working with the principals and other administrators to develop a plan for dealing with the reduction in the budget. Right now the district is in better condition with regard to staff hiring than in the past year. Mrs. Osuba pointed out that students who do not speak the language struggle in the classroom so bringing back the bilingual program is very important. Mrs. Lambert clarified that previously she was asking how this program would be funded with the budget cuts. Dr. Garcia indicated that cuts may be made in other areas so the funding would be available for the bilingual program. Dr. Sewall commented that the budget cuts come from the Board of Finance but they cannot dictate which programs are affected by the cuts in the budget that these are decisions that the Superintendent will make.

TEALS

Windham High School has been accepted as a partner school in the TEALS program. This will enable the high school to offer an Intro to Computer Science class during the 2016-2017 academic year. The course will be co-taught by a WHS teacher and a TEALS volunteer. No new staff positions will be needed.

USDA Summer Food Service Program Applications

The necessary information is being prepared and the application will be brought to the Board at a future meeting.

Safety and Security Plans

The Board has been supplied with a sample copy of the safety and security plans which have been submitted and approved to be sent to the State.

Mr. Quamme arrives at 7:30pm.

WORKSHOP TOPIC

Teacher Retention

Dr. Garcia introduced the presentation on the topic of teacher turnover, which topic was requested by Mr. Montalvo. Mr. Weathers and Ms. Beghetto presented the program. Dr. Garcia indicated that the presentation would be done in three sections: reasons for teacher turnover, actual data, and years of service of teachers. She stated that Windham turnover is in line with school districts with similar demographics.

The key factor for teachers to leave urban schools was school working conditions. The presentation reviewed exit survey data from Windham School District, the national average teacher experience, and number of resignations. The turnover rate for school in free/reduced lunch districts is higher than Windham's rate.

There was a discussion regarding issue of the turnover for Teach for America being very high and the fact that this year there has been no Teach for America teachers hired. It was pointed out that the program is structured as such that there tends to be high turnover.

There was discussion about what the District can do to improve the two areas that can be impacted directly which are school climate and the frequency of testing. Dr. Garcia said that school discipline is one of the largest factors and the District is working on a plan to address school culture and restorative justice. The Board agreed that training is essential and that the work needs to begin in the early grades.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance and Audit Committee

There has not been a meeting of the committee since the last Board report. The budget referendum will be held on June 28. The amount of funding that will come from the State is still fluid. The next committee meeting will be scheduled for after the 28th and all Board members are encouraged to attend.

School Planning and Design Committee

Mr. Kalajian was not in attendance; therefore, Dr. Garcia gave the committee report. The committee met the week prior to discuss the community conversations regarding the high school educational specifications. The specifications are included in the packet since it is important to have them in place prior to the outreach to the community. It is important that the Board come to agreement on the curriculum and educational specifications so that the community can have as much information as possible available to them. Changes can be adjusted as the process continues. One issue is that the cost of the project must be available during the community events. Mrs. Lambert says the concepts need to be clear since any changes that happen after the plan is accepted will require new design which is very costly.

Motion of Dr. Sewall, seconded by Mr. Quamme, that the Board of Education accepts the Educational Specification for Windham High School as presented. Mrs. Lambert indicated that these specifications are not the same as those that had been presented to the Board previously and discussed some questions that she had with regard to the document that had been submitted. Dr. Garcia requested that members of the Board submit their questions which would be forwarded to the committee to address. Mr. Montalvo stated that he was not in favor of having the International Baccalaureate Program included in the Educational Specifications.

Motion of Mr. Montalvo, seconded by Mrs. Lambert, that the International Baccalaureate Program be removed from the Educational Specifications for Windham High School.

There was no further discussion.

Motion is unanimously approved.

Dr. Sewall stated that there needs to be an integrated program that provides for students to gain college credits. Dr. Garcia said that meetings with the University of Connecticut are in process but there is a question as to whether there are teachers available to teach the programs. Mrs. Lambert asked whether a Saturday Program for AP students could be reinstated. Mr. Quamme said the program was helpful to him when he was in school.

Motion to Vote deferred by Mrs. Lambert, seconded by Mr. Quamme

There was no further discussion.

Motion is unanimously approved.

Executive Committee

Has not met and will not be meeting in July unless there is an urgent matter.

Policy Committee

The committee presented the policies that will be on tonight's agenda for second reading.

ACTION ITEMS

Recommended approval of the Second reading of Bullying Prevention & Intervention Policy 5131.911 and Promotion/Acceleration/Retention Policy #5123 (Ref. 2)

Motion of Dr. Sewall, seconded by Mr. Montalvo, that approval of the policies before the Board be split into individual actions.

There was no further discussion

Motion is unanimously approved.

Motion of Dr. Sewall, seconded by Mr. Quamme, that the Board approve the revised *Bullying Prevention & Intervention Policy 5131.911. (Ref. 2)*

Mrs. Lambert asked whether staff would be trained in the new policy and the forms would be available. Dr. Garcia and Mrs. Packer said training has taken place and will continue to take place. Mrs. Packer said that there was a presentation made at Parent University in the last session and this will be presented again this year at Parent University. This is the second reading of Bylaw and no changes have been made since the first reading.

Motion is unanimously approved.

Motion of Dr. Sewall, seconded by Mrs. Lambert, that the Board approve the revised *Promotion/Acceleration/Retention Policy #5123 (Ref. 2)*

On the first page, fourth paragraph, the word “minimize” has been stricken. In the first, sixth and thirteenth paragraphs, the words “the CMT and CAPT” were eliminated. In paragraph five, the words “Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT)” were replaced with “Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT)”. Mr. Montalvo expressed concern regarding students with language challenges being impacted by the policy. Dr. Garcia said this underscores the importance of a bilingual program. Dr. Sewall said that the standards are set with different levels of competency.

Motion is unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mary Gallucci, Windham, said that teacher retention is an ongoing issue in Windham and that utilizing the Teach for America Program with only a two-year commitment is not helpful. She said that students and parents should be involved in addressing the issues of climate in the schools.

Motion of Mrs. Lambert, seconded by Mr. Montalvo to add to the agenda the approval of the Safety and Security Plans for All Schools Based on the Sample Provided.

No further discussion.

Motion is unanimously approved.

Motion of Mrs. Lambert, seconded by Mr. French to approve the Safety and Security Plans for All Schools Based on the Sample Provided.

No further discussion.

Motion is unanimously approved.

Adjournment

Motion by Mrs. Lambert, seconded by Dr. Sewall, that the Board of Education enter into executive session at 9:02 P.M for the discussion of exempt documents pertaining to personnel matters and bargaining unit negotiations.

The motion is unanimously approved.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

BOARD PRESENT: Chair Mrs. Osuba, Vice-chair Dr. Sewall, Mrs. Lambert , Mr. Montalvo, Mr. French, Mr. Quamme

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Superintendent Dr. Garcia, Ms. Beghetto

OTHERS PRESENT: Jessica Ritter, Esq.

Mrs. Lambert left the meeting at 9:33 P.M.

REGULAR SESSION RECONVENES

Chair Mrs. Osuba reconvened regular session at 9:56 P.M.

Motion by Mr. French, seconded by Dr. Sewall, that the Board approve the Administrative Support Personnel Chapter 168 of SEIU, Local 2001, CSEA, CTW's contract.

Motion is unanimously approved.

Motion by Mr. French, seconded by Dr. Sewall, that the Board approve Local 1303-432 of Council 4 AFSCME, AFL-CIO's contract.

Motion is unanimously approved.

Motion by Mr. French, seconded by Mr. Montalvo, that the Board adjourn its meeting at 10:01.

Motion is unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Murphy Sewall, Vice Chair