



**TORRINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, February 17, 2016
355 Migeon Avenue**

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call:

Present: Fiona Cappabianca, Chair; Joanne K. Brogis; Ellen G. Hoehne; Bill Knight; Jim Lamoin; Andrew Nargi; Jessica Richardson; Daniel Thibault; Kenneth P. Traub; Peter Vergaro

Administration: David Bascetta, Director of Facilities; Joseph L. Campolieta, Director of Human Services; Jerry Domanico, Director of Business Services; Paula LaChance, Interim Director of Student Services; Susan M. Lubomski, Assistant Superintendent; Lynda T. Reitman, Interim Superintendent

Absent: Mayor Carbone

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY SESSION

The Chair outlined the purpose and rules of the School/Community Session.

There were no speakers.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Traub made a motion to approve the agenda with the following changes; remove item (5) Execution Session, add (A-2) TAG students and add item (4-O) IT Audit Update. Mr. Nargi seconded the motion. All in favor.

INFORMATION SHARING SESSION

A. Superintendent's Report

1. TMS Debate Team

Ms. Reitman recognized the Debate Team and faculty for winning the CT winter debate in January. 16 schools participated with 51 teams. All 3 of our debaters finished in the top 25 individually.

2. TAG Students

Ms. Reitman recognized their achievements and thanked them for sharing their projects with the Board before the meeting.

3. AP/UCONN ECE

Have been going down in AP scores, 2014 25% of students scored a 4 or above as of 2015 that rate has gone back up to 59%.

Dr. Brogis asked what percent of students enrolled in courses take the exam. She would like to hear that information.

Ms. Reitman stated she would look into it.

4. Life Skills Brunch

Ms. Reitman and members of the Board attended a brunch at TMS on Friday, served and prepared by the students. They also shared a slideshow that showed the other events that they do in the community as well.

5. Webinar Security

Mr. Bascetta and Ms. Reitman will be attending webinar in early March about the topic of Swatting. It will focus on threats that are called in and how they are intended to distract a large number of law officials. From this, they will use that information to determine if our policies are up to date.

6. Student Report

No student to report.

B. Staffing Reports

Mr. Thibault reported absence by school, what is the fill rate with our substitutes. Discrepancy on a daily basis with fill rate teachers v. paras

C. Board Retreat

The Chair reported that the Board Retreat will be held on Monday, July 18 at 6:00 at Migeon Ave. Board attorneys will be present.

D. Field Trips

Ms. Reitman spoke in regards to the (4) pending field trips.

The first field trip to spring training at Disney World, April 2017 to funded through softball team fundraisers

Trip to NYC to Museum of Modern Art in April 20, 2016. 3 staff members, 36 students plus parent volunteer.

Ms. Richardson stated her concern about field trips that cost money and there is no fundraising opportunity.

Mr. Traub questioned how they approve something that adds to their budget when they froze the budget.

Mr. Traub questioned how many students would be left behind, do we need (3) substitutes.

Third trip, TMS trip to NYC to visit the TSS Intrepid Museum, 9/11 memorial and Battery Park for May 2017.

Last field trip proposed is TMS trip to Washington DC, May 2017.

E. Board Handbook

The Chair reported that each Board member now has their own handbook updated with current information. Next month, everyone will get a policy handbook.

F. BOE Self-Evaluations

Turned over to Personnel Committee to create a form for Board members to evaluate itself.

G. Special Education Update

Ms. LaChance reported not a lot has changed. List of students out placed as of July 1. Still looking at ways to condense and enhance programs we already have.

Dr. Brogis questioned if we had Life Skills classes in Elementary School.

Ms. LaChance stated not that she was aware of, which is why she is looking into creating Life Skills so they have a continuum.

Ms. Reitman stated they are presently in the hole \$470,000 and they have additional costs not budgeted for of 1.8 million.

Mr. Traub stated there is about \$120,000 reimbursable funds.

Ms. LaChance stated for out-of-district anything above \$71,000, we potentially get reimbursed 75% of that.

The Chair stated that they are working on exact numbers, don't want to put numbers out there until we know what the exact Medicare reimbursement is.

Mr. Vergaro questioned if we can hire someone for one-on-one cheaper than out-placing.

Ms. LaChance stated she is very stringent on who gets out placed and she doesn't take it lightly. She does everything she can to maintain child in the district.

H. 2016-2017 Budget Plan

Ms. Reitman reported what the plan is on how the budget will be put together. Remainder of this year, focus has to be making sure “our house is clean” and rectifying past mistakes. For next year, want to focus on stability and have a good foundation to build on. Doesn’t feel like in a good position to add new initiatives.

Mr. Domanico has been clear that we are developing a budget based on the real needs of our students. Ms. Reitman stated that there will be a series of special meetings to discuss budget and public hearings. The budget will get to the Board of Education in March. The budget will go to the City in April.

Biggest driving coming into the budgets, what do our kids need to be successful.

Ms. Reitman stated that the bottom line for whatever we do this year is intended to provide stability. Has been out to each site so far to determine what are the issues, met with building administrators to discuss enrollment, staffing, etc.

I. Proposed District Calendar

Have 2017-2018 calendar to administrators out for your review. By April voted on by Board.

Mr. Vergaro stated that teachers don’t view half days as effective in regards to professional development.

Ms. Reitman stated that they are somewhat limited due to the number of contact hours with students.

Mr. Traub stated that there are no built in snow days. 3 snow days are built in for 2016-2017, one snow day for 2017-2018 and then graduation is on that Sunday.

Ms. Reitman may in the future move graduation, has been problematic to be on Father’s Day.

Ms. Reitman will bring calendar back to the Board in March.

J. Course Change

a. AP World Language

Ms. Galullo (Grade 11 Administrator from THS) reported that they are seeking to take the AP designation off the level 5 courses because the enrollment is so low. Students will still be able to receive ECE or UCONN credit. AP test in May, cost associated with, college can choose to accept the credit. Teachers have found students shy away from course if it has the AP designation.

Mr. Traub questioned if it saves any money taking the AP off.

It could since teachers have to stay current with the AP designation, small amounts. Teachers also have to do the work to submit a syllabus each year.

Mr. Traub stated most state schools want the UCONN designation but private ones don't accept that, only AP.

Even with the AP designation taken off, they can still sit for the test.

b. PE ½ year

Combine quarter long courses and make them semester long. Right now 37 days of PE and 37 days of health. If student doesn't pass they have to wait a full year so it can fit into their schedule to re-take that class. In a few years, looking into rolling out PE and Health elective classes.

K. Distinguished Alumnus

Ms. Richardson report in SIC they are accepting nominations for the THS Distinguished alumnus award.

Cool opportunity to highlight people that have come through our district and have done great things.

L. CT Conference of Municipalities Workshop

The Chair, Ms. Richardson and Ms. Hoehne attended the workshop last month. Wanted to distribute information obtained. Hoping there will be more workshops like that that the Board can take advantage of.

M. Social Media Policy

Committee went through it made a couple changes.

Ms. Richardson, if accepted by the BOE what is the time frame and how will it be rolled out.

Ms. Lubomski stated that it starts with administrators so they can share with their staff.

Mr. Campolieta would add to intake interviews so employees would sign and receive a copy of it.

N. IT Audit

Several weeks ago audit was forwarded to Board's attorney for review. They have done their analysis and developed a legal opinion. They would like to hold a special meeting on Monday (February 22) at 6:00 to hold executive session with the Board to go over the audit. The agenda will be forth coming, developed by Board's attorneys.

ACTION ITEMS

A. Monthly financials

Mr. Traub made a motion to approve the monthly financials. Mr. Lamoin seconded the motion. All in favor.

Mr. Traub also stated that at the Budget Committee meeting they asked the Business Director and Administration to have a mitigation plan in place by the 14th of March.

B. Budget transfer request

Mr. Bascetta found that they had not made a transfer we needed to for landscaping. Need to move \$97,000 to landscaping account from Special Ed tuition. Approved by Budget committee last month.

Mr. Vergaro questioned if this \$97,000 is contractually obligated.

Ms. Reitman stated it was.

Mr. Traub made a motion to approve the budget transfer request. Dr. Brogis seconded the motion. The vote passed with one (1) opposed, Mr. Nargi.

C. Field trips

Mr. Nargi made a motion to amend the agenda to include the field trips Disneyworld, Washington D.C. and NYC (Intrepid Museum) as one action item and the last field trip to NYC Modern Art Museum as a separate action item. Dr. Brogis seconded the motion. The vote passed with one (1) opposed, Mr. Traub.

Mr. Vergaro made a motion to approve the field trips to Disneyworld, Washington D.C. and to NYC (Intrepid Museum). Mr. Thibault seconded the motion. All in favor.

Mr. Vergaro made a motion to approve the NYC (Museum of Modern Art) contingent on the cost of substitutes being included in trip and at zero cost to the Board. Mr. Thibault seconded the motion. The vote passed with one (1) opposed, Mr. Traub.

D. Course change proposed (AP)

Mr. Vergaro made a motion to approve the course changes (AP). Ms. Richardson seconded the motion.

Mr. Vergaro stated the teachers came to the Committee level because teachers requested the change so it's easier to teach their course.

Ms. Reitman stated that they are not reducing AP courses and never adding, last year added four (4) or five (5) courses.

Ms. Richardson suggested taking a year without the AP designations and re-evaluating.

Ms. Richardson stated that the AP courses don't make our district prestigious if they are not succeeding.

The vote passed with three (3) opposed, Mr. Traub, Mr. Nargi and Mr. Knight. Dr. Brogis abstained.

E. Approval of Course Proposed (PE)

Mr. Traub made a motion to approve the proposed PE Course. Mr. Lamoin seconded the motion. All in favor

F. Approval of Social Media Policy

Ms. Hoehne made a motion to approve the Social Media Policy. Mr. Thibault seconded the motion. The vote passed with one (1) opposed, Ms. Richardson.

G. Approval of Consent Agenda

Mr. Traub made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Ms. Hoehne seconded the motion. All in favor.

H. Appointments & Resignations

Mr. Traub made a motion to approve the Appointments and Resignations minus the first name on Ms. Hoehne seconded the motion. All in favor.

Comments for the Good of the Order

Mr. Vergaro points out in administrators' contract that there are going to be transfers that the views of administrators around the district based on that change must be solicited by March 1 so we meet that contract. Mr. Vergaro also expressed his concern with Central Administration not working on days the schools have snow days. All other employees are forced to go to work or to use a vacation day.

Mr. Thibault agrees with Mr. Vergaro on his second comment. Mr. Thibault also wanted to confirm that one elementary school in district has a Lifeskills set-up in it. Places in the district where things could be done.

Mr. Traub clarify news article that appeared in today's newspaper, was not in agreement with mayor that there were 9 to 11 positions not filled, he simply stated there were no numbers in front of him to either confirm or disagree with her. Simply stated would get the list to clarify

Ms. Hoehne went to East School on Friday after Life Skills Brunch, concert on Feb 10 well attended and huge success. The 10th was NW Chambers read aloud. 2-2:30 meet in small groups to play games with an adult other than his or her teacher. They do this every couple months. Feb 26 game night sponsored by PTO.

Jim Lamoin join Mr. Vergaro on his comment as well about snow days. He would like to look at a computer program for foreign language at the middle school during budget season and hopefully bring that back.

Dr. Brogis followed up on Mr. Vergaro's comment, very seldom did they close all the district or delay when she was a teacher. Visited Forbes School, teachers very enthusiastic, sat down with principal, good to get feedback about the needs of the school. Would like a follow-up on the whole AP issue. She would like a follow-up on the exit interviews previous talked about.

Mr. Knight stated that things at Torrington School are going well and he attends PTO meetings on a regular basis, successful fundraisers, and movie night well attended. Elementary school honors band having a concert on May 4 2016. Received email from Beth Lesley, Legislative & Regulations person for the Office of Protection and Advocacy, there are going to be having a public hearing and one of the bills being heard is an act concerning budgets of local Boards of Education.

Mr. Nargi expressed concern over the lack of cost sharing that the state has provided to the district to the past several years. Hoping Mr. Domanico will work with him or give him a phone number.

The Chair commented that everyone has been assigned a school, especially during budget season it would be good if everyone could reach out to a school

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Budget Committee – Mr. Traub reported that they asked administration for the mitigation report on projected overages.
- B. Grievance Committee – Mr. Lamoin reported that the attorney for 1579 has retired so they are re-visiting the current grievances.
- C. Personnel Committee – Mr. Thibault reported they will be taking a look at the fill rates for our staff.
- D. Policy Committee – Ms. Hoehne reported that they will be visiting online discussion, the Health Policy, timing for course proposals, vaccinations with religious exemptions and the number of courses needed for graduation.
- E. School Improvement Committee – Ms. Richardson reported that they had a good meeting with all new committee members, went over things done in the past to get everyone on same page. Will be talking about the website, district is already in the process of talking to different developers. Reviewing Distinguished Alumnus applications. She stated that they are the only committee that allots members of the community time to share and wants to invite people to do that.

- F. Education Connection- Dr. Brogis reported there was no meeting held, meeting upcoming, and the most valuable part is networking with people in other districts.
- G. Turf Field Committee – Mr. Nargi reported the install on the record board will be done sometime in March, then Committee can be dissolved because there is nothing else to be done. However, a major concern is who gets to control the activity schedule on the turf. Advisable for the Chair to talk to the mayor to set up a timeline when it will be turned over to the Board of Education.

ITEMS FOR UPCOMING AGENDA

- A. BOE Self- Evaluations
- B. 2016-2017 Budget
- C. District Calendars
- D. BOE School Liaison Roles

FUTURE MEETINGS

Tuesday, February 23, 2016 (at Migeon Ave.)

6:00 p.m. – Discussion of a Confidential Student Matter

Tuesday, February 23, 2016 (at Migeon Ave.)

7:00 p.m. – Discussion of a Confidential Student Matter

Wednesday, March 2, 2016 (at Migeon Ave.)

6:00 p.m. – School Improvement and Community Relations Committee

7:00 p.m. – Policy Committee

Thursday, March 3, 2016 (at Migeon Ave.)

6:00 p.m. – Budget Committee Special Meeting

Wednesday, March 9, 2016 (at Migeon Ave.)

6:00 p.m. – Personnel Committee

6:30 p.m. – Budget Committee

Monday, March 14, 2016 (at Migeon Ave.)

6:00 p.m. – Budget Committee Special Meeting

Wednesday, March 16, 2016 (at THS)

6:00 p.m. – Regular Board of Education Meeting

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Traub made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Knight seconded the motion. All in favor.
Meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.