

Board of Education Meeting  
January 7, 2014

Call to Order

Board Chair, Robert Eccles, called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m. in the Suffield Middle School auditorium. Present: Board members Robert Eccles, Mary Lou Sanborn, Michelle Zawawi, Lori D'Ostuni and Jeanne Gee; Superintendent of Schools, Karen Baldwin; and Assistant Superintendent, Jim Collin.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board member, Scott Schneider, arrived at 6:40 p.m.

Change to Agenda

**MOTION #14-01:** Sanborn moved, Gee seconded **to make the following changes to the agenda: change item IV-Recognition to item III and to change item VIII.D-Report of the District's Implementation of the new Educator Evaluation System, to VIII.B.** The motion passed unanimously.

Recognition

The Superintendent recognized 26 Suffield High School juniors who achieved the Advanced level on all four CAPT subtests during their sophomore year. Each student was introduced and presented a letter written by the Connecticut Commissioner of Education, Stefan Pryor. Students recognized were: Michael Allen, Joseph Barnes, Brandon Bartus, Brent Baskin, Martha Beringer, Kira Bourret, Asa Carpenter, Sam Cutler, Taylor Daigle, Connor Donahue, John Gilleran, Colton Grob, Bridgette Gunn, Jesse Kuhns, Alexandra McCrewell, Erin McGann, Hayley O'Connell, Luke Peterson, Emily Powell, Thomas Rigby, Gabrielle Rusczyk, Zachary Salters, Alexandra Schneider, Divya Subramanian, Nicole Wagner, and John Zawawi.

Board member Beiter entered the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

Public Comment

A group in excess of 50 Agriscience students, parents, staff members and supporters were in attendance to express their concern about the continuing delay of the opening of the Large Animal Facility. Agriscience Director, Laura LaFlamme, addressed the meeting. She stated that two new courses were offered this year in the Agriscience Department in the anticipation that the new building would be open. She expressed her frustration that students are missing out on the additional agriscience experiences that would be provided by the use of the new building. A quick resolution to the fire pump project and the building punch list is needed.

Also addressing the Board of Education were: Frank Lutwinas, Chair of the Agriscience Consulting Committee; Carolyn Mark, senior Agriscience student; Jessica LaRosa, sophomore Agriscience student; Eric Raffia, parent, and Kristin Raffia, freshman agriscience student; Kathy Gero, parent, and children Taylor and Austin, both senior Agriscience students; Sandra VaValle, parent, and Carissa VaValle, senior Agriscience student; Ed Cook, 1985 SHS agriscience alum; Mary Joaquin, parent; Tara Harlow, 2001 SHS Agriscience alum and current Agriscience teacher in Rockville; Molly Drakeley, senior Agriscience student and FFA District President; Harrison

Griffin, former Director of the Suffield Agriscience Department; and Ken Roddy, parent. Each speaker spoke in support of a rapid resolution to the Large Animal Facility situation.

Board Chair Eccles thanked everyone for coming and asked that they continue to voice their concerns. Board member Gee made special note to thank the students for attending this public meeting and speaking.

#### Communications

None

#### Approval of Minutes

Gee moved, Zawawi seconded to approve the minutes of the December 3, 2013 Board of Education meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

#### Consent Agenda

None

#### Discussion Action Items

- Update on Large Animal Facility  
Joe Sangiovanni, Chair of the Permanent Building Commission, updated the Board on the status of the fire pump and Large Animal Facility projects.

An RFP has been developed for the fire pump and bids are due January 16. Interviews will be held the following week with a formal notice of award during the week January 27<sup>th</sup>. Subcontractors should complete the project within 90 days of the contract award.

Roof defects, wall crack and floor cracks have been documented in the Large Animal Facility. These defects can be fixed. There is money available to pay for repairs in the payments withheld from the original contractor. Mr. Sangiovanni stated the contractor believes we owe him the payments and the matter is likely to lead to litigation. Chair Eccles asked if the building could be opened if these problems were not fixed. Mr. Sangiovanni stated that the building could be used while the fixes were being done. Chair Eccles asked that Mr. Sangiovanni keep the Board updated on the situation during the next several weeks. The next meeting of the Permanent Building Commission is Thursday.

Board member Sanborn left the meeting at 8:03.

- Report of District's Implementation of New Educator Evaluation System  
Mark Janick, math teacher and President of the Suffield Education Association joined administrators in presenting an overview of Suffield's implementation of the new educator evaluation system (SEED) which will improve evaluation of teachers and administrators. This new evaluation system is driven by change in the state statutes. Mr. Janick stated that overall the new system is positive and changes will continue as we refine the process and flaws are worked out. Mr. Janick identified two areas of challenge in the SEED implementation: (1) the 45% component connected to an assessment system that is changing (Smarter Balanced); and (2) teacher collaboration time. Board member Gee asked if results of the pilot program of SEED of other districts were documented and

are available. The Superintendent stated that NEAG is compiling this data. Board member Zawawi appreciated hearing about the evaluation from a teacher's perspective. She asked if any thought had been given to professional learning community early releases in the district which occurs in other districts. The Superintendent indicated that more collaboration time is being included in the 14/15 budget and it will not create a need for release time for students, wanting to maintain instruction time for students. Board member Beiter asked for regular updates on this subject. The topic will be placed on the January 21 Board of Education agenda for approval. In February, the Superintendent will have members of the districts Professional Learning Committee present their feedback on the new system thus far.

- November 2013 Financial Report

The Board reviewed the 2013 November Financial Report. There was a brief discussion on the remaining deficit in the area of insurance. Board member Beiter asked about the savings in the area of electricity. The Superintendent stated that a meeting with PowerPoint had been held on December 23 and she had just received a communication. She will have further information once she has read the report. Board member Beiter also stated that he felt we should be using the word "forecast" instead of "deficit" when discussing the financial status. Board Chair Eccles asked that details relative to the Electricity account be discussed in the Facilities meeting with an update back to the Board.

- Report of District's Transition to Smarter Balanced Assessment and Implementing the Technology Grant

Technology Director, Becky Osleger, and Assistant Superintendent, Jim Collin, reported to the Board on Suffield's readiness to implement the new Smarter Balanced Assessment and the role technology plays in this implementation. The District received \$238,014 and due to the implementation of the strategic plan, the grant dollars enhance digital learning K-12. The Board was able to view new Chromebooks which will be used in the Smarter Balanced Assessment by students in Grades 3-12. The Chromebooks will support a 1:1 digital learning environment at Suffield High School next fall. Board member Zawawi stated that questions on the practice Smarter Balanced Test are very challenging.

- Policy #6172.3 – Homeschooling and School Activities

This policy has been on the table for the required 30 day period. The Superintendent stated the legal counsel's information and advice and research of other districts who allow home schooled children access to school activities. She then presented the policy committee's recommendation and the reasons why the policy prohibits home schooled children from participating in extracurricular activities. Information provided by the Board's legal counsel was provided. Board member Beiter stated that this policy should be inclusive, not exclusive of homeschooled children. Board member Gee concurred stating that the public schools belong to all members of the community. Board member Zawawi spoke of the obligation of access for all children once one child is given access. Board members Schneider and Eccles discussed liability concerns. Board member D'Ostuni spoke about providing opportunities for children and the rationale in the written policy. A debate of the policy followed.

**MOTION #14-02:** Schneider moved, Zawawi seconded **to accept policy #6172.3, Home Schooling, as presented.** The motion was defeated 3-3 (Eccles, Schneider, Zawawi voting for; and Beiter, D'Ostuni, Gee, voting against).

Board Chair Eccles asked for the policy to go back to the policy committee for changes. Board member Gee asked if sample policies could be obtained from districts that do allow for homeschooled students to participate in extracurricular activities.

#### Reports to the Board

- Superintendent's Report

- The Superintendent updated the Board on administrative vacancies. Letters have been sent to middle school parents inviting them to participate in compiling a leadership profile on January 16<sup>th</sup> as the process of looking for a new middle school principal begins. It is anticipated that the Superintendent will meet with the Middle School Continuous Improvement Steering Committee for feedback as well. An internal posting for the principal position will be released next week and an external posting will be up by January 26. The Superintendent will meet with the middle school faculty on January 14 to discuss the recruitment/screening process. Target date for Board interviews will be May.

The Business Manager position will be posted this weekend. The compiling of a leadership profile for this position is underway.

- The Superintendent provided an update on the School Security Grant. This is a matching grant with state and town and the timeframe is an issue. There is only one budget cycle in which to spend the funds. The Superintendent stated that the list of items was created working with police officers Craig Huntley and Terry Antrem as well as discussing these items with ACCE as district needs. It was not known that the grant would be a matching grant and the Superintendent noted that there will need to be further discussion with the Board of Finance and ACCE. The Superintendent emphasized that any project like this should be managed by the Board of Education. Information and a spreadsheet of items and costs were distributed with the board packets.

- Chair's Report

- Committee assignments were distributed to Board of Education members (see attached).
- A Tri-Board meeting will be held on January 15, 7 p.m. in the Suffield Volunteer Ambulance training room. The budget for 14/15 will be discussed.

#### Subcommittee Reports

- Student Programs and Services – Subcommittee Chair D'Ostuni stated that a meeting was held on December 12 with the topic of the Academic Support program's effectiveness district wide as measured by student learning outcomes. There was a process of data collection and inquiry which began in 11/12 through the first marking period of 13/14 school year. The analysis reported out by the principals and shared at the meeting by the Superintendent is that Spaulding has effectiveness with basic alignment of Tiers I-II and II being strong. Grades 3 – 8 shows inconsistencies evident in data sources, collection methods, and connection to the intervention used, as well as the alignment to Tier I

learning goals. Grades 9 – 12 has a program designed as a basic homework support program and needs a systemic approach that effectively supports students. The Leadership Team is moving forward with a new model that will be developed to strengthen Tier I instruction and creates a direct link between Tier I and the interventions provided in Tier II and Tier III. This process will be part of the 14/15 budget development and will continue in future budgets.

- Facilities – Subcommittee Chair Beiter reported that a meeting was held on December 20 regarding the School Security Grant and that a significant amount of money was awarded to Suffield. He discussed the need to work closely with Board of Finance and ACCE on this issue as he noted the spreadsheet of expenses.
- Policy – Board member Gee reported that the subcommittee had met just before this evening’s Board meeting. They discussed the policy on pediculosis, which is tabled for further review. Also noted were policies for virtual online credit recovery and policy 1330, Use of School Facilities, which is being revised due to legislation change, both being put on 30 Day read. The educator evaluation system was also discussed.
- Budget – Subcommittee Chair Schneider said a meeting will be held with the Superintendent and Board Chair tomorrow to map out the budget process. A subcommittee meeting will be held soon.

#### Future Business

- Substitute Service Budget Study and Kelly Services
- Gender Gap Writing/SRBI
- PALS Program – 2013/13 student data and parent survey results – June 2014
- Learning Management System status – February 2014
- Educator Evaluation Plan Implementation and Plan Approval
- School Improvement Goals
- SEED – Staff SLO’s – February 2014

#### Public Comment

Stephanie Durocher of Windsor Locks, parent of an Agriscience student, commented on the homeschooling policy. She stated that last year her family found themselves in a situation where she needed to home school her two children for the remainder of the year in Windsor Locks and was not able to participate in the extracurricular activities. She spoke of her children not being able to participate in activities with their friends and the difficulty in finding activities for her children to be a part of as a result.

#### Adjournment

Beiter moved, Schneider seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori D’Ostuni  
Secretary

Attach.

LD/ajk

Suffield Board of Education  
Committee Assignments  
December 30, 2013

Budget:

- Scott Schneider (chair)
- Mary Roy
- Jeanne Gee

Facilities:

- George Beiter (chair)
- Mary Lou Sanborn
- Michelle Zawawi

Student Programs and Services:

- Lori D'Ostuni (chair)
- Scott Schneider
- Michelle Zawawi
- Jeanne Gee

Policy:

- Mary Lou Sanborn (chair)
- Natalie Semyanko
- Jeanne Gee

Personnel:

- Mary Roy (chair)
- Lori D'Ostuni
- Natalie Semyanko
- George Beiter

CREC Liaison:

- Mary Lou Sanborn
- Jeanne Gee

Note: Agri-Science Oversight Committee liaison will be a duty of the Administration.