

Board of Education Meeting
October 3, 2016

Call to Order

Board Chair Gee called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. in the Suffield Middle School Auditorium. Present: Board members Lori D'Ostuni, Natalie Semyanko, Jeanne Gee, Kendra Wiesel, Susi Keane, George Beiter, Michael Sepko, Superintendent Karen Berasi, Assistant Superintendent Brian Hendrickson, and Business Manager Bill Hoff

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Recognition

The Board of Education recognized Linda Seabury, who has retired after teaching in Suffield her entire career; 42 years. Karen Berasi said Ms. Seabury is an extremely special person. Ms. Seabury began teaching in 1974, she was the teacher of year in 1984, and she has numerous letters in her personnel file from superintendents and staff complimenting her music performances and dedication to her profession. She is an exemplary educator, a respected colleague and has fostered the love of learning in students and staff alike. Mr. Pearce said Ms. Seabury has an intense dedication to students and the music program at Suffield Middle School. Laura Noonan surprised Ms. Seabury by singing "Wind Beneath My Wings" and the staff presented her with a gift. Ms. Seabury thanked everyone for being in attendance and providing her with closure. She said Suffield Public Schools is very important to her. Her daughter attended here and she obtained an excellent education. She read the names of the eight superintendents she has worked for in her 42 years.

The Board took a brief recess. The meeting resumed at 7:00pm

Public Comment

None

Approval of Minutes

Beiter moved, Keane seconded to approve the September 19, 2016 minutes. D'Ostuni noted she came to the meeting but left before it began, so minutes should reflect that she was not in attendance and the vote for the approval of minutes should also reflect her absence. All members voted in favor of the amended minutes, except D'Ostuni who abstained. The motion carried 6-0-1.

Consent Agenda

None

Discussion Items

- Discussion and Approval of the Following Policies/Regulations:
 1. Policy # 4112.51/4212.51 – Employment/Reference Checks (Certified & Non-Certified)
 2. Policy #4111/4211 – Recruitment and Selection (Certified & Non-Certified)
 3. Policy #5141.4 – Child Abuse and Neglect
 4. Policy & Regulation #5144.1 – Use of Physical Restraint/Seclusion

Board Chair Gee noted that the changes in these policies and regulations are due to legislative changes. Board member Keane asked if forms would be removed. Ms. Berasi answered in the affirmative.

MOTION #17-11: Keane moved to approve the above policies/regulations as presented, Sepko seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

- 2016-2017 District Improvement Plan

Superintendent Berasi said the District Improvement Plan identifies three long term strategic goals and six imperatives, which are aligned to the district's vision, mission and five-year strategic plan. During the 2016-2017 school year, the district will be focusing on three of the six imperatives: improve student outcomes, teacher evaluation and instructional observation, and communication and coherence. This plan and these initiatives will drive the budget process. Ms. Berasi said the District Improvement Plan maps out the district's future for continuous improvement, and will be reviewed annually against the key measurements, detailing progression and future goals. The District Improvement Plan also provides the superintendent with an internal accountability structure. She explained the district's long term goals and the specific key measures and evidence for measuring each goal. She noted the strategies are prioritized according to teacher feedback. The Board discussed avenues to increase communication among all stakeholders, specifically through social media avenues.

Mr. Hendrickson reviewed the district professional development priorities and the core vehicles that will drive professional development aligned to each of the three goals. Again there are specific key measures and evidence for each of the goals. Specific student data will be tracked over time to monitor the effectiveness of the districts improvement efforts. A fall intervention report will be given showing data from interventions, tutorials, and other support systems. Board Chair Gee noted using the phrase "strategic goals" to refer to the district long term objectives could be confused with the district's five year strategic goals. The long term district strategic goals will be titled, "long term district improvement goals," to avoid any confusion with the current strategic goals. Board member Sepko suggested a graphic to clarify the strategic goals from the district improvement strategic goals. Board members discussed how the district improvement plan aligns to the District strategic goals. Board members had questions around the specific data presented. Principals will present their school improvement plans at the next meeting.

- Approval of extending the Assistant Superintendent's contract by one year (through June 30, 2019)

MOTION #17-12: Beiter moved to approve extending the Assistant Superintendent's contract by one year (through June 2019), D'Ostuni seconded the motion. Board Chair Gee thanked Mr. Hendrickson for his work and the enormous momentum he has created in driving the work in curriculum development and instruction. Board member Semyanko said she was honored to chair the Teaching and Learning subcommittee and she has seen firsthand all the work Mr. Hendrickson and his team have done in curriculum development. Board members Beiter, Sepko and Keane also commended Mr. Hendrickson. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports to the Board

Superintendent's Report

- Ms. Berasi said DMC is coming this week to meet with administrators on the budget. She will be in constant communication with the Board throughout the budget process. She noted the decrease of \$115,000 in the Choice Grant. Administration will be looking at class size and enrollment.
- She noted there were a couple more parental concerns relative to transportation this week but Bill successfully remedied both situations.
- Ms. Berasi sent Board members a draft of the yearly BOE agenda planner and noted planning starts before the beginning of the school year for the entire year. She asked Board members if they had other topics they would like to come to the Board to please let her know.

Chair's Report

- Board Chair Gee said she attended a CAFE workshop on running a better board meeting and would like to discuss some of the tips she received with the Board at their evaluation meeting. She also noted that CAFE has an electronic meeting service that streamlines meeting agenda development and follow-up and she would like the Board to consider this service.

- Ms. Gee attended a CREC meeting last week and noted the Choice grant was reduced in almost all districts with no notice given by the State. She said CREC is concerned around tuition costs because of a reduction in State funding. CREC may have to raise tuition rates which will affect our students who attend magnet schools.
- Board Chair Gee stated the Board's self-evaluation will be conducted on November 5 and Nick Caruso will be compiling the data.

Business Manager's Report

- Mr. Hoff said finger scanning started today at McAlister and will start tomorrow at Spaulding.

Subcommittee Reports

Board member Keane said the HR/Personnel subcommittee met on September 21 and will meet again on October 5.

Board member Keane said the Budget subcommittee met on September 30 and discussed the budget planning process, ACCE priorities, and the Voice Over IP system.

Board member D'Ostuni said the Policy subcommittee met to discuss adding public comment to the end of board meetings. Board member D'Ostuni said if there are three board members interested in the issue it could go to the full board for discussion. Board members Beiter, Sepko and Wiesel would like to discuss this at the next board meeting. The committee also reviewed the student discipline policy and questioned a change from the Board's attorney. The Superintendent will review with the Board's attorney and the subcommittee will revisit this policy at their next meeting.

Board member Semyanko reminded Board members of the Curriculum Cabinet workshop tomorrow at 8:00 a.m.

Future Business

None

Adjournment

Beiter moved, Keane seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:46 p.m.

Minutes are subject to approval at the next meeting on October 17, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori D'Ostuni
Secretary