

Board of Education Regular Meeting
September 17, 2018

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. in the Suffield Middle School Auditorium.

Present: Board members Kendra Wiesel, Susan Mercik Davis, Maureen Sattan, Matt Service, Debra Dudack, Jamie Drzyzga, John Richter, George Beiter, Interim Superintendent Mark Winzler, Assistant Superintendent Michelle Zawawi and Business Manager Bill Hoff

Absent: Michael Sepko

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Recognition

None

Public Comment

None

Minutes

Dudack moved, Beiter seconded to approve the September 4, 2018 regular meeting minutes. All members voted in favor except Beiter, who abstained. The motion carried 7-0-1.

Consent Agenda

MOTION #19-12: Dudack moved, Beiter seconded to approve the following policy/regulation revisions on the consent agenda:

1. P#4111 – Recruitment and Selection
2. P/R#5141.4 – Mandated Reporters
3. P#5113 – Attendance, Excuses, Dismissal
4. P#5113.2 – Truancy
5. P#5122.3 – Assignment to Former Home-Schooled Students to Classes
6. P#5123 – Promotion/Acceleration/Retention
7. R#5123.2 – Summer School Work for Credit Recovery
8. P&R#5131.911 – Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy
9. P#5136 – Foreign Students Attending Schools
10. P&R#5141.4 – Child Abuse, Neglect & Sexual Assault
11. P&R#5141.41 – Reports of Suspected Abuse or Neglect of Mentally Retarded Adults
12. P&R#5144.1 – Use of Physical Restraint/Seclusion
13. R#5145.5 – Sex Discrimination & Sexual Harassment (Students)
14. P#6145.6 – Travel and Exchange Programs

Discussion/Action Items

- August 2018 Financial Report

Mr. Hoff reviewed the financial report noting the projected year-end shows a net surplus of \$4,075. The district's turnover savings are approximately \$90,000 less than the \$181,400 budgeted. The two academic support personnel being added to Spaulding School are not included in these numbers. Mr. Hoff noted that state grants have not yet been received.

- Special Services Update

Mr. Winzler said he and Ms. Epps have reviewed the 2011 CREC Report and the first step that needs to be done is to determine what precisely needs to be studied. Mr. Winzler contacted Debra Richards, Director of Student Services at CREC who was also a part of the study team in 2011. The first step is to gather information from parents and staff members to identify the concerns by preparing a confidential survey for parents of all students who receive special education services and for staff to complete; and to facilitate focus groups. CREC will conduct the focus groups and the results of both the surveys and focus groups will go directly to CREC to ensure fidelity in the process. Once the information is completed, CREC will report the findings at which time the district may choose to investigate further and/or establish action plans to address the findings. In the event there are findings that need to be investigated further, then an audit will be conducted in those areas. This process will also identify areas of strength.

Mr. Winzler said he should have the proposal from CREC within the next week. In response to a Board member's question, he said a timeline will be included in the proposal.

Mr. Winzler announced that Denise Epps, the Interim Director of Special Services, will complete her service on October 19. Ms. Epps has many years' experience and has been a very quick study and has worked in a very productive manner. Mr. Winzler said he is searching for another interim while continuing the search for a permanent director. He said the district needs a permanent director sooner rather than later and we should not wait until the program review is complete to hire someone. However, it is not an easy position to fill, not only because two certifications are required, but also because in the field of educational leadership, the director of special services is viewed as the least desirable position because of the unending demands placed upon the person. Mr. Winzler and Ms. Zawawi have reviewed all the applications and have begun to screen selected candidates to determine suitability. Mr. Winzler noted one of his specialties in educational leadership is human resources, and having read thousands of applications and conducted over 750 interviews, he is confident he can help the district in its search; however, the district should not settle on someone just to fill the position. If a candidate is not found, the position will be reposted. In response to a board member's question, Mr. Winzler said he anticipates the interview process to begin in early October.

- New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc. (NEASC) Report

Mr. Blain introduced Jason Efland and Dominic Casolari, SHS teachers and co-chairs of the NEASC steering committee. Mr. Blain said the first phase of the process was that the entire staff reviewed the report during one of their August professional development days. The staff was divided into seven groups to review one of the seven standards and discuss the commendations, recommendations and next steps. The groups then reported back to each other. The second phase begins on October 2 when the steering committee goes to the commission to receive assistance in writing its two and five year plans which will encompass implementation of the recommendations. The high school is already looking at corrective actions and putting recommendations in place. Mr. Blain reviewed the commendations noted in the report, including, the use of Rubicon Atlas; increased collaboration time; increased use of PLC time; creation of Wildcat time; teachers' use of formative assessments; providing a safe, supportive and positive learning environment; offering a wide variety of electives to students; providing open enrollment for AP courses; and increased communication between parents and school. Recommendations noted were increase authentic learning opportunities for students (i.e. internships); create a curriculum draft and revision cycle; create vertical articulation between the high school and middle school; provide teacher training for meaningful integration of technology; the Student Assistance Model (SAM) needs to be implemented with more fidelity;

formulation of school-wide rubrics; and integrate the Core Values into curriculum, instruction and assessments. Mr. Casolari said the self-study portion of the process was very productive and self-reflective. There were no surprises in the report as the self-study results were similar to the report. Mr. Efland added it was a very honest process. Mr. Blain said the staff is invested and took the process very seriously. In response to a Board member's question, Mr. Blain said the biggest challenge is restoring a positive culture in the school. In order to implement these recommendations a level of trust has to be established between staff and the building administration. In response to a board member's question as to how the Board can support this work, Mr. Blain said continued understanding of the process and support of the high school faculty and staff by the Board is essential. Mr. Winzler said, conversely, if the board did not support the work such as in lack of funding, it would be Mr. Blain's responsibility to report that to the commission. NEASC considers the principal the CEO and the role of the Superintendent and Board is that of support. Mr. Winzler and Mr. Blain noted the immense amount of work done by the SHS faculty and they both commended Mr. Efland and Mr. Casolari as well as the other teachers who have invested much of their time to this study.

Reports to the Board

- Superintendent's Report - Mr. Winzler said due to a higher number of students in grade 2 than expected, we were able to identify funds in the budget to add two academic support personnel and those positions have been posted. Mr. Winzler met with Nikki Lengyel, the Town Youth Services Director and he also met with First Selectwoman, Melissa Mack. He and Ms. Mack discussed the importance of open communication and also ways to share services. Currently the town and district technology departments are piloting a shared service model. Mr. Winzler will also be meeting with first responders.
- Board Chair's Report - Ms. Wiesel noted an upcoming CABE legal issues workshop in October.
- Business Manager's Report - Mr. Hoff addressed the food service issue that had been posted on social media. This year in order to look for ways to improve efficiencies, some food for the elementary schools (salads, sandwiches and fruit cups) was being prepared at the high school and transported to the elementary schools. It was stated that the food was being transported in an unsanitary manner. Mr. Hoff said that was not correct as the food was transported in sealed coolers. The health department was not concerned with the manner of transport but did indicate the food was not cold enough before leaving the high school. As of last Tuesday, all transporting of foods has ceased and food is being prepared at each school. Mr. Hoff added that he received communications from two parents as well and relayed this information to them. The district will continue to look at ways to increase efficiencies in the food service program.

Subcommittee Report

- A. September 17, 2018 Policy Subcommittee Meeting – Board member Dudack said due to CABE's upcoming audit of the district's policy manual, all revisions to policies are being put on hold until completion of the audit which should occur mid-winter. The only exceptions are bylaw #9160 which allows for SHS student representatives to attend board meetings, bylaw #9325.2 – Order of Business (just changes to the current order of agenda items and not adding a second public comment to the agenda); and Policy #6159 – Individualized Education/Special Education Programs, which is mandated by State law to be included in district policy manuals.

Future Business

None

Adjournment

Beiter moved, Richter seconded to adjourn the meeting at 7:37 p.m.

Minutes are subject to approval at the regular meeting of October 1, 2018.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra Dudack
Secretary

DRAFT