

LITCHFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 1, 2014

A regular meeting of Litchfield Board of Education was held on Wednesday, October 1, 2014, at 7:02 p.m. in the Litchfield High School Library Media Center.

Present: Mr. Simone, Chairperson; Ms. Carr; Ms. Fabbri; Ms. Rosser; Messrs. Clock, Falcetti, Shuhi and Waugh.

Also present: Dr. Pandiscio; Ms. Mongeau; Ms. Murphy.

Approval of Minutes:

a. MOTION made by Ms. Carr and seconded by Ms. Fabbri: to approve the minutes of regular meeting on September 17, 2014 with the following corrections: Ms. Rosser was not in attendance; motions on page 3290 to approve both sets of minutes was made by Mr. Bongiorno, not Mr. Simone; correct several "second" to "seconded" on motions, on page 3292 under Administrator's Reports take out the second "and" in the 4th sentence and add "to" in the 6th sentence between "in ... select books"; also, take out "just" in the 6th sentence before "right level". On page 3294 under Old Business change sentence to read: "Motion made by Mr. Bongiorno and second by Mr. Falcetti: to approve the document that we approved twice and move forward." On page 3293 in the second paragraph, 1st sentence – after Ms. Mongeau, change to "when the IEP Direct would be fully functional". On page 3295 Ms. Rosser was absent and therefore did not vote in the motion to approve the three technology positions.

MOTION tabled.

Approve Payment of Invoices:

a. MOTION made by Ms. Carr and seconded by Ms. Fabbri: to approve the payment of FY 2014-15 invoices on Accounts payable warrant dated 10/02/2014 in the amount of \$194,100.39.

Discussion: Mr. Shuhi asked what COSTA was – Mr. Simone said it was a School bus organization.

MOTION carried. All votes were in the affirmative. Mr. Simone abstained.

Public Comment and Correspondence Communications:

b. **LHS Student Council** – Arielle Brandt – reported that student council printed maps for freshman and gave them out in Flex on 1st day of school. Council also decorated

bulletin boards for students' return. For the Under the Lights games, Student council organized Spirit Week and at the games, student council sold t-shirts, not for profit. November 19th will be the day for the Autumn Fest; November 11th, there will be a Veteran's Day ceremony with 1st selectman Leo Paul at Brandywine. Chamber choir to sing National Anthem and other patriotic songs. Semi-formal in December with date TBD. Week of October 6 – Pie sale will begin, to start the funding for major leadership conference

c. **Litchfield Prevention Council** – nothing

- a. **PTO** – Lynn Stone reported a strong start for the year with the welcome back event at Community field on Sept 5th. More families from Center school attended than from LIS or LHS. October 9th at 7:00pm - first general meeting. First fundraiser of the year – KidStuff Coupon books; selling books for \$25.00, and will make \$12.50 on each book - sale ends October 9th. The books were distributed October 1st.

Bigger expenses this year that PTO wants to support –

1. \$3500 for each school for special areas of cultural enrichment for Library Services and Physical Education. Have been in touch with coordinators.
2. Non-fiction writer coming to Center School and LIS in October
3. Working with LIS Library – 'Maker Space' project, a new concept in Library Science – went to Westport Library for training, robots bring you to the Maker's Space, 3-D scanners and printers, 12-13year old boys running the Maker's Space at the Westport Library
4. October 24th – Fall Festival Friday night at LIS which is the biggest fundraiser. Students dress up, teachers give out candy and there are raffles.

Question – further explanation of Maker Space – Debbie Benedict has been telling them about this sharing technology, what libraries are going to be in the future. Students help other students with this learning, using technology, i.e. 3-D printer to make cell phone case.

Jennifer Murphy: “Maker Space helps libraries create knowledge, not just a place to take out books”. In the process of writing grant with Debbie Benedict to start this program in Litchfield. Robotics component and electrical circuitry. Students will program with software and apply skills learned using math, science, engineering. Hands on programs. Hopefully sparking a new generation of scientists and engineers.

PTO wants to help yearly to make this happen here in Litchfield. Grant for electrical circuitry and robotics called “Lil bits” and “Scratch”. Grant needed would be approximately \$4500. There would be stations at the Library where students would rotate around using each station to learn different skills; hoping to add dimension to teaching.

Ms. Carr acknowledges and appreciates Mrs. Murphy's grant initiatives.

- a. **STPC** – nothing to report
- d. **Public Comment**
 - Ms. Morgan commented on cell phone use in the schools and the lack of freshman orientation at LHS.
 - Ms. Garden commented on cell phone use in the schools and the BOE and Administration being reactive with consequences regarding Safe School Climate.
 - Ms. Carr commented on an incident regarding some Jewish students and a derogatory, anti-Semitic action made against them.

Question – Was the incident addressed at the school level? Ms. Carr “No”.

- e. **Correspondence:**
 - Stacy Carosella Morgan – email regarding grades 4-6 participating in the Swim Team.
 - Katie Sullivan – thank you card for 25 Years of Service award

f. **Administrators’ Reports:**

Jennifer Murphy reports that on October 10th, LIS will hold its annual Fire Prevention Day. All are invited. October 15th - 8:40 – 9:30am - Assembly for grant funded program “Learning through Motion” through the After School Arts Program, with Artist in Residence, Michael Motion, who will be doing a school wide kick off assembly for his work with the 5th grade which will take place weekly for the remainder of the school year. Those classes will begin the week of October 21st. All are invited to the assembly. These classes will help students with math, science, physics, and engineering. Also on October 15th – “Global Cardboard Challenge” from YouTube video “Cains Arcade” which is from a California student who built a cardboard arcade in his father’s mechanic shop. Will work well with the Maker’s Space project. LIS has been collecting cardboard and students will begin October 6th making games and will have them on display on October 15th.

Michele Mongeau report – one question by Ms Carr regarding when IEP direct program training to begin. Ms Mongeau “training will begin this month.”

Superintendent’s Report:

Mr. Waugh asked if the Tech Position applicant reviews are still scheduled to take place on October 9th. Dr. Pandiscio confirmed.

Mr. Waugh also asked if the information on the swimming and lacrosse programs will be ready for the October 15th meeting.

Old Business: none

New Business:

a. **Tuition rates:**

MOTION made by Ms. Carr and seconded by Mr. Clock: to establish the 2014-2015 Non-Resident Students tuition rate at \$9,665 for grades K-6 and \$11,589 for grades 7-12.

Discussion: Ms. Carr asked if tuition of all special services is paid by the school district – Ms. Mongeau: “Yes, if student is attending a school outside their district, the nexus district by law is responsible.”

MOTION carried. All votes were in the affirmative. There were no abstentions.

b. **Special Education Position:**

Other options discussed including moving personnel from other buildings to LIS; disruptive. Dr. Pandiscio’s report shows how services are assigned and how scheduling will be done. Services need to be provided.

Discussion: Ms. Carr asked has there been an increase in the number of special needs students? Ms. Mongeau replied that there was not an increase in the number of students, but the kinds of needs warranted individualized attention.

Ms. Mongeau mentioned how early intervention services are provided. Dr. Pandiscio mentioned that the request was made a year ago but never got put into the budget. The need was established and it is not known why it wasn’t put into the current budget, and Dr. Pandiscio wants to identify how personnel requests are made and processed.

Ms. Carr replied that she was concerned because we identified a need for more psych services and we hired another mental health professional and another position put into the budget and where would the money be coming from? Dr. Pandiscio responded that the position is needed and as Superintendent, it is his job to find the money within the budget. Ms. Fabbri agreed that identified students need to be covered, as temporary measure this year. We’ll be looking into scheduling and the number of students going through the SRBI process in CPP this year and where there are areas we can improve in the delivering of SRBI before they have to be in Special Ed.

Ms. Carr asked about the assessment of the efficacy of the SRBI process this year. Ms. Fabbri responded “Yes, that is what we intend on doing through the rest of this year with CPP here at LIS. We will be starting with 4th grade at our next meeting. We’ll be focusing on the needs at LIS.”

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MOTION made by Ms. Fabbri and seconded by Mr. Clock: to add an additional Special Education Teacher at Litchfield Intermediate School.

MOTION carried. All votes were in the affirmative. There were no abstentions.

Committee Reports:

Policy Committee – no report

Finance Committee – Mr. Shuhi reported they have not met.

Facilities and Technology – Mr. Bongiorno not in attendance.

Ms. Fabbri requested that the cell phone policy be reviewed again since “we've had several requests from the community and feels we need to honor the community with their concerns and start looking at that policy and start making a change.”

Ms. Carr replied that the policy was reviewed and the committee “met with teachers and administrators not once, but twice, we reviewed the policy multiple times, upon the multiple requests, we redrew it and brought it to the Board. The Board discussed it and threw it back to us, we went back and looked at it, brought it back to the Board and voted on it. It was a stalemate and no movement could be taken on this policy. There's been no change in the Board and I really don't see that the investment of additional time in that policy is going, at this point and time, given the current makeup of the Board, much room for movement or change.”

Ms. Fabbri feels that “the requests from the community where we need to show that we are making an effort to honor their request and if it takes more time for the committee to talk with people from Facilities and Technology, now is the time to do it. We need to make an effort again this year. People are frustrated and coming back to us a year later, nothing's been done and I think, we as a Board need to start acting and putting appropriate polices forward to protect our children.”

Ms. Carr responded that we heard from the same two people speak last year and we've heard from the High School administrators, Intermediate School administrators, and the Superintendent and we went back and forth over it and are at a stalemate on this issue. Unless something has changed, it is not felt that spending more time is going to end up in a different direction. Mr. Clock added that he agrees with the parents and this is the first he's heard of problems with the policy. He doesn't feel that photos should be taken and posted. Only two people in community voicing complaints on this issue and he would like to hear more from administrators. If there are issues we do need to approach this and address it.

Mr. Simone responded that with two members mentioning this policy, it needs to be put back on the agenda.

Mr. Waugh also mentioned the bullying issue brought up earlier is a serious issue. It needs to be addressed as part of our Safe School Climate, it cuts across not just this policy, but we need to address this.

Need to ask Mr. Bongiorno to put the Cell Phone policy on the Facilities and Technology agenda. Next meeting will be on October 14th.

Policies:

- a. Review - Policy 5145.14 On-Campus Recruitment – no change
- b. First Reading – Policy 5145.12 Search and Seizure – rewrite of the policy, statutory references have been updated. Discussion. This new rewrite is clearer and more in line with the current law. Return for second reading at next regular BoE meeting.
- c. Second Reading – Policy 5141.5 Suicide Prevention and Intervention – change has been made for clarification if student not seen by mental health official and sent home without some safety action taken. Language about Memorials was changed and discussed. Mr. Falcetti concerned that “we are telling kids what to eat, drink, what to do and not to do and now we are going to tell them how to mourn and I object to that.” Mr. Clock agrees with him but “the committee has poured over it and have toned it down considerably and assume that trained people have come up with these things and we have to take some of it to heart that that could happen, so we need to be careful.” Ms. Carr responded that people mourn in different ways and in recognition of what you are saying, one person's mourning should not have to be thrust with a physical memorial in front of students coming to school on a daily basis. “Discourage vs. Avoid” discussion. Memorial – What is it? Tree vs. floral arrangements. “The school discourages the creation of contemporaneous on campus physical memorials. Permanent memorials are encouraged.”

MOTION made by Ms. Carr to amend and seconded by Mr. Waugh: to approve Policy # 5141.5 Suicide Prevention and Intervention as corrected.

MOTION carried. All votes were in the affirmative. Mr. Simone abstained.

- d. Second Reading - Policy 5141.7 Student Sports – Concussion and Head Injuries: pulled back to Committee for further review.
- e. Second Reading – Policy 5144 Corporal Punishment:

MOTION made by Ms. Carr to amend and seconded by Mr. Waugh: to approve Policy # 5144 Discipline/Punishment as amended in paragraph 4.

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MOTION carried. All votes were in the affirmative. Mr. Simone abstained.

Mr. Simone asked Ms. Carr “Do we have a policy about sponsorships for the schools?” Ms. Carr remembers discussing it, maybe 6 years ago, not sure why it hasn't come up again, but will take a look.

Ms. Carr asked Dr. Pandiscio to have Ms. Hodges put on future Policy Committee agenda Concussion and Head Injuries and the Sponsorship Policies.

MOTION made by Ms. Carr and seconded by Mr. Falcetti: to adjourn the meeting at 8:07 p.m.

MOTION carried. All votes were in the affirmative. There were no abstentions.

Respectfully submitted,
Donald Falcetti, Secretary
Lynn Moncuse, Recording Secretary