

LITCHFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 19, 2014

A regular meeting of the Litchfield Board of Education was held on Wednesday, February 19, 2014, at 7:00 p.m. in the Litchfield High School Library/Media Center.

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

Also present were: Dr. Wheeler; Mr. Lathrop; Ms. Della Volpe; Ms. Murphy; Ms. Turner; the public and the press.

Approve Minutes

MOTION made by Mr. Falcetti and seconded by Mr. Waugh: to approve the minutes of regular meeting January 22, 2014 as submitted.

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

Approve Payment of Invoices

MOTION made by Mr. Bongiorno and seconded by Ms. Fabbri: to approve the payment of invoices on Accounts Payable warrant dated 2/6/2014 in the amount of \$40,682.45, dated 2/20/2014 in the amount of \$251,918.41, and approve payment of invoices on Food Services warrant dated 2/19/2014 in the amount of \$24,046.84.

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

Public Comment and Correspondence

- a. STPC – none
PTO – none
- b. LHS Student Council – Mattie Bove reported on the LHS student council activities.
- c. Other Public Comment
 - Mr. Dranginis commented on past experiences and issues as swim coach; and a personnel matter involving the high school principal.
 - Ms. Perilla commented in support of the student life survey.
 - Ms. Donnally commented on thanking the Board for supporting safety of the students.
 - Ms. Carr commented on supporting the “Music Man” performance Feb. 28th, Mar. 1st and 2nd.

- Mr. Glander commented in support of Ms. Della Volpe and in support of the survey.
- d. Correspondence
 - A letter from Ms. Lavoie in opposition to the student life survey.
 - A letter from Ms. Vermilyea in support of the survey.
 - A letter from Ms. Abbott regarding personnel matter involving Principal.
 - A letter from Mr. Buckland in support of the Principal.
 - A letter from Mr. Sutton in opposition to the survey.
- e. Administrators' Reports
 - Ms. Turner reported: successful Kindergarten information session held on Feb. 10 and another to be held in March and April.
 - Ms. Della Volpe reported: upcoming play "Music Man" and NEASC update.
 - Ms. Murphy reported: very enjoyable K-12 Waterbury Symphony orchestra concert through grant funding; Connecticut Read aloud day and donated books.

MOTION made by Ms. Carr and seconded by Mr. Bongiorno: to move agenda item VII d.

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

d. Medical Insurance Update

Mr. Lathrop distributed a L&R benefits outline and introduced Mr. Lindberg who reported on the benefits package including: health plan budget; costs fixed, variable and combined; allocation rate realignment; expected outcomes; new benefit plan rollout; meetings held; health care reform.

Superintendent's Report

- a. Magnificent concert held by the symphony orchestra.
- b. Request for unpaid leave.

MOTION made by Mr. Shuhi and seconded by Ms. Carr: to approve the extended, unpaid leave request from Lianne Ambruso for the remained of the school year.

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

c. Resignation

MOTION made by Ms. Carr and seconded by Ms. Fabbri: to approve the resignation of Shoshana Armington as school guidance counselor as of February 28, 2014.

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

- d. Snow Days update: calendar distributed; LEA wants to exhaust June; avoid April break; possible Saturday school; and possible school on Memorial Day.

Board members discussed: seat time for AP classes; exams in early May; making adjustments by teachers; need input from AP teachers; end of June for students is difficult; need for April break; and no time off with April break.

- f. Alumni Survey results: 88 responded; 69 attend 4 year university/college; 67 attend to graduate on time; 58 felt further preparation in real-world applicability was needed; and 53 thought research skills were needed to better prepare them to better prepare them.

Board members discussed: 400 – 500 email addresses, 25% responded; formal research papers not done in high school; scope and sequence 6-12; Capstone requirement.

- g. Litchfield Education Evaluation & Development Plan: new flexibility option; can concentrate on 1 goal rather than 2; # of observations for this year; 1st and 2nd year teachers do not change observations.

Board members discussed: formal evaluation process; pre-conferences and post-conferences; informal minimum of 3; status this year; possible need for additional observations; input from evaluators on target with scheduling.

MOTION made by Ms. Carr and seconded by Mr. Bongiorno: to adopt the changes to the Litchfield Education Evaluation & Development Plan as presented.

Board members discussed: SMART goals; develop as a team; need for conversations with teachers; amount of work needed for goals; pilot last year helped for this year; more comfortable this year; status of school is exemplary; changes State makes are challenging.

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

- h. K-5 Mathematics program update: need for math program K-5; review of programs; visiting teams observed math programs; narrowed down to “My Math” and “Stepping Stones”; full PD for “My Math;” sister to Glencoe Program used in grades 6-8; feedback from visiting committee; aligns with Common Core; piloting a unit soon; focused on Common Core Standards alignment, rigor of instruction, and use of technology.

Board members discussed: timing of pilot lessons; timing for math program when State is always changing their requirements; instructional rigor; question about spending money on program that State might change in a few years; difficulty to create material without program; curriculum aligns with common core; input from the high school; teacher PD; content info needed; program as resource not curriculum; if teachers not satisfied then won't purchase; need for depth and breadth in math program; free sites for math work; lessons on line; need for alignment across grades; possible teacher coach could be used; need for consistency; students that are outliers affect school scores; need to get ahead of the curve; and old math program not useful since not aligned with common core.

- i. Attended Affordable Care Act symposium, preparing a report on the future and impact on school district.

Old Business

- a. Profiles of Student Life Survey –

Board members discussed: 80% for the survey; Ms. Kubisek liaison for Board; issues with survey; parent opt out option; and number who opted out by grade level.

Board consensus was to have decision stand and not discuss opening up the discussion again.

New Business

- a., b., c. Out of State Field Trips

MOTION made by Ms. Carr and seconded by Mr. Clock: to approve the out of state field trips – Music in the Parks Music Festival (grades 7-12), Agawam, MA; - Music in the Parks Music Festival (grades 5 & 6), Agawam, MA; and Six Flags (grade 12), Jackson, NJ.

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

- e. NEASC - handout, “Sample Timeline, Suggested Schedule for Spring 2015 Accreditation Visits; Steering Committee presentation overview of accreditation process: visiting committee to arrive Spring 2015; cost in budget; standards write up; executive summary; 16 people visiting in May; Board of Ed members to be interviewed; and goals from visiting committee will be worked on over the next 10 years.

Committee Reports

Curriculum, Programs and Personnel - Ms. Fabbri reported that the meeting was cancelled due to snow.

School Security - Mr. Bongiorno reported that the committee developed a list put forth to Facilities and Technology committee; and budget impact.

Facilities and Technology - Mr. Bongiorno reported that the committee discussed: list from security committee in minutes; new filtering issues; new devices rolled out at high school.

Policies

- a. Second Reading – Policy # 4118.51/4218.51 Employee Use of Social Media.

MOTION made by Ms. Carr and seconded by Mr. Waugh: to approve Policy # 4118.51/4218.51 Employee use of Social Media as revised.

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

- b. Second Reading- Policy # 5131 Bring Your Own Device and 1-To-1 Computing.

MOTION made by Ms. Carr and seconded by Mr. Waugh: to approve Policy # 5131 Bring Your Own Device and 1-To-1 Computing as revised.

Board members discussed: need for student cell phone in school; issues with 3G and 4G; safety issues; filtering issues; limited liability; issues with picture taking; administration input; teacher input.

MOTION made by Ms. Carr and seconded by Mr. Waugh: to move the question.

MOTION failed. Ms. Carr, Ms. Rosser, Mr. Clock and Mr. Waugh voted were in the affirmative. Ms. Fabbri; Mr. Bongiorno; Mr. Falcetti; Mr. Shuhi and Mr. Simone voted in the negative. There were no abstentions.

Board members discussed: use of cell phone not during school day; students could carry phones in backpack or on person; connection issues with computer policy; school computer issues with inappropriate sites; more control without cell phones; and need to trust administrators and teachers.

MOTION failed. Ms. Carr, Ms. Rosser, Mr. Clock and Mr. Waugh voted were in the affirmative. Ms. Fabbri; Mr. Bongiorno; Mr. Falcetti; and Mr. Shuhi voted in the negative. There were no abstentions. Motion did not garner 2/3 affirmative votes need to adopt policy.

- c. Second Reading – Policy # 5131.4/6177 Technology.

MOTION made by Ms. Carr and seconded by Mr. Waugh: to approve Policy # 5131.4/6177 Technology as revised.

MOTION carried. All votes were in the affirmative except Mr. Bongiorno who voted in the negative. There were no abstentions.

Old Business

- b. 2014-2015 Budget Proposal and discussion.

Dr. Wheeler noted that a video highlighting technology use in the district is available on the district website.

Mr. Shuhi reported that the Finance committee met before the meeting this evening and discussed: budget workshop scheduled tomorrow night in place of Policy; budget process calendar adjusted due to snow dates; philosophy and how to approach budget process; items want to move forward; security and safety proposals; separate from budget items; input from town regarding security; 4.79% as is with Kindergarten position added, NEASC balance, and \$100,000 for security items; SRO question; \$160,000 is 1% increase; possibly add Pre-K; control only about 11% of budget remainder are fixed costs; transportation, oil, salaries and insurance are given; frugal budget for many years; fixed expenses take up most of budget; need input from administrators who know best; food service issues; mental health, pre-school and security and enhancements; mill rate issues; 2 teaching positions cut; possibly go with largest percentage and see how Board of Finance cuts; class size; Board of Finance concerned about education but has different priorities in mind; adoption scheduled for March 5th.

MOTION made by Mr. Falcetti and seconded by Ms. Carr: to move into Executive Session at 9:20 to discuss collective bargaining issues.

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

Executive Session

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

Dr. Wheeler and Mr. Lathrop were invited to attend.

Open session resumed at 9:35 p.m.

MOTION made by Ms. Carr and seconded by Ms. Fabbri: to authorize the superintendent and/or her designee to create and administer an additional medical plan for over age 65 retirees to include the reimbursement of Medicare Part B costs and Stirling and Stirling benefits provided by the Teachers' Retirement Board.

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

MOTION made by Mr. Falcetti and seconded by Ms. Fabbri: to adjourn the meeting at 9:37 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Donald Falcetti, Secretary
Joanne Bertrand, Recording Secretary