

BERLIN BOARD OF EDUCATION
March 12, 2007
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING

Attendance: Gary Brochu
Julie Erickson
Diane Mancini Absent
Kathleen O'Donnell-Moss
Christopher Puzio
Anthony Recck
John Richards Arrived at 7:15 p.m.
Rachel Rochette

Also in attendance: Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Rena Klebart; Director of Business Operations Roman Czuchta; Director of Pupil Personnel Services Margaret Butler; Principal of Griswold School Laurie Gjerpen; Principal of McGee Middle School Brian Benigni; Principal of Willard School Robert J. Sullivan II; and Principal of Berlin High School George Synnott.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Brochu called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. in the Board of Education ("the Board") meeting room at 238 Kensington Road, Berlin, CT. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was observed.

II. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Erickson reported on her attendance this past Wednesday, along with Mr. Brochu, Ms. O'Donnell-Moss and Ms. Rochette, at CABE's Day-on-the-Hill at the State Capital. Ms. Erickson remarked it was a pleasure having Governor Jodi Rell speak to the Connecticut Association for Boards of Education and present her initiative for education as well as having the opportunity to speak with local representatives. Ms. Erickson has information to share with anyone who is interested.

Ms. Rochette echoed Ms. Erickson's comments regarding her attendance at CABE's Day-on-the-Hill this past Wednesday and indicated it was a good opportunity to speak with the legislature.

Mr. Recck apologized for the delay in distributing the January 3, 2007 special meeting minutes to the Board. Mr. Recck reported on the meeting of the Executive Panel for the PJ case, which met two weeks ago, reporting it was the last time the panel met before completing its final report. Mr. Recck reported the panel has come to the conclusion that the State of Connecticut has not reached the progress that it wanted on inclusion but will not be coming back unless the law changes. Mr. Recck will provide a copy of the final report to the Board once it is released.

Ms. O'Donnell-Moss echoed both Ms. Erickson's comments and Ms. Rochette's regarding her attendance at CABE's Day-on-the-Hill this past Wednesday. Ms. O'Donnell-Moss reported on her attendance on Friday, February 23, 2007, at the interesting round-table discussion held by Senator Joseph Lieberman at the State Capital concerning the reauthorization of NCLB. Ms. O'Donnell-Moss reported the Branford Board of Education has approached her, for the second time, requesting Berlin's Board of Education sit in on one of its Board meetings and then Branford sit in on one of Berlin's meetings as Branford saw Berlin's presentation at the CABE conference and was very impressed with what Berlin is accomplishing.

Mr. Puzio reported on March 2, 2007 he had the opportunity to visit Hubbard School and read to the first and second grades and discuss good character. Mr. Puzio reported on his attendance at the first round of interviews for the position of Hubbard School principal.

Mr. Richards reported on his meeting with the teachers (BEA) this date regarding the L Savings Account. Mr. Richards reported a third session will take place to move from the concept to actual examples.

Ms. Butler reported on her attendance this date at the Unified Sports Tournament at the Berlin High School.

Mr. Czuchta reported the Town Council will hold a public hearing on the Technology Plan on Tuesday, March 20, 2007. This will be an opportunity for Berlin citizens to speak and ask questions of the consultant who compiled the Technology Plan.

Ms. Klebart reported on her attendance, along with Roszena Sutton, at CREC's Minority Teacher Recruitment on Saturday, March 10, 2007. Ms. Klebart reported on the completed second round of interviews with the Administrative Council for the Hubbard School principal search. Ms. Klebart, in Dr. Cicchetti's stead, recognized Board of Education Member Appreciation Month, extending a sincere thank you for all the work the Board has done and all the time the Board gives for the students and staff.

Mr. Brochu reported on the search process for the position of Principal of Hubbard School. Mr. Brochu reported that tomorrow night the Board is meeting with the Town Council Budget Committee.

III. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

Ms. Jan Zagorski, 63 Grandview Avenue, Berlin, Connecticut, addressed the Board concerning the Berlin Swim Team. Ms. Zagorski noted the Swim Team will be participating in three relays in the tournament at Wesleyan University. Ms. Zagorski reported that Andrew Thurston has qualified in two events for finals. This is Berlin's second year and the team is doing awesome. Ms. Zagorski also reported that Robotics is next weekend.

IV. PERSONNEL

A. Retirement

Ms. Klebart presented the notice of Ms. Valerie Ireland's intention to retire as teacher of grade 4 at Emma Hart Willard School, effective June 30, 2007.

Moved by Ms. O'Donnell-Moss, seconded by Ms. Rochette, to accept the retirement of Ms. Valerie Ireland, teacher of grade 4 at Emma Hart Willard School, effective June 30, 2007. Also to thank her for the twenty-two years of service she has provided to educating the youth of Berlin and to wish her good health and happiness in her retirement years.

FAVOR: ALL

MOTION CARRIED: 7:0, including President Gary Brochu

V. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes

1. Regular Meeting of February 12, 2007

Mr. Richards requested that the portion of the minutes that reads, “The Pledge of Allegiance was led by students Lindsey Brochu and Morgan ??? (Gary will know).” be corrected to read as follows: The Pledge of Allegiance was led by students Lindsey Brochu and Morgan Kuckel. The correction was made to the minutes.

2. Special Meeting of January 3, 2007

B. Resignations

Ms. Ellen Lessard, teacher of Spanish at Berlin High School, has submitted a letter of resignation to be effective June 30, 2007.

Ms. Carolyn Robins, teacher of Spanish at Berlin High School, has submitted a letter of resignation to be effective June 30, 2007.

C. Payment of Bills – Period ending February 28, 2007

Moved by Mr. Richards, seconded by Mr. Puzio, to approve the consent agenda as now presented.

FAVOR: ALL

MOTION CARRIED: 7:0, including President Gary Brochu

VI. INFORMATION AND REPORTS

A. Activity Fund Reports

1. Berlin High School Enterprise Fund – Period ending January 31, 2007
2. Berlin Public Schools Activity Fund – Period ending January 31, 2007
3. Cafeteria Fund – Period ending January 31, 2007

No motion is necessary for these reports. Please note with interest.

B. NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges) Update

Berlin High School Principal George Synnott updated the Board on the high school’s self study and preparation for the October 2007 NEASC accreditation site visit as well as answered questions from the Board. Mr. Synnott reported that the study is on schedule. Mr. Synnott reported, at this point in time, the Committee on Community Resources has filed its report, which has been approved, and within the next two months, the remainder of the reports will be filed before the faculty for approval. Although the site visit and evaluation takes place next school year in October, all reports need to be completed by May of this year. Mr. Synnott reported that the Continuous Improvement Plan at the high school has been the framework and organizing template that the various sub-committees used for the NEASC self study. The evaluation team will arrive on Sunday, October 21, for the visitation after which the team will spend three days at the school reviewing all the reports and evidence that have been compiled. Mr. Synnott reported that one of the items that still need to be completed is a collection of student work that will support all of the different standards, which are instruction, assessment, curriculum, leadership, community resources, school resources, and the mission statement. Mr. Synnott reported that the reports should be available to the Board by May.

C. Project Choice Participation for 2007-2008

The Project Choice discussion has been tabled for the next meeting.

VII. RECOMMENDED ACTION

A. Finalize School Calendar 2007-2008

Ms. Klebart noted the dates for parent conferences (one for the high school and four each for the middle school and elementary schools) and five early-release professional development days. The calendar also maintains two late arrival days for middle school and high school to support preparation for the October 2007 NEASC site visit as well as follow up on recommendations resulting from that visit. Ms. Klebart noted that considerable discussion was held regarding the five professional development days in order to balance the calendar and provide days for professional development. The days were spread throughout the calendar so there is not a cluster of days when students are out of school. Ms. Klebart also noted that the parent conferences were moved later in the year. This change was made to align more closely with the report card distribution schedule and allow teachers to use data they use for report cards while conferencing with parents.

Moved by Ms. Rochette, seconded by Ms. O'Donnell-Moss, to approve the Berlin Public Schools adopted calendar for 2007-2008 as proposed.

FAVOR: ALL

MOTION CARRIED: 7:0, including President Gary Brochu

B. Proposed School Calendar for 2008-2009

The Board was provided with the proposed 2008-2009 school calendar. It follows past guidelines with respect to the first day of school and vacation weeks. The proposed calendar was brought to the Administrative Council for review and discussion. The calendar was also reviewed by the Board's Leadership, Accountability, and Measurement Committee at its March 5 meeting.

Moved by Ms. Erickson, seconded by Mr. Reck, to adopt the 2008-2009 Berlin Public Schools calendar as proposed.

FAVOR: ALL

MOTION CARRIED: 7:0, including President Gary Brochu

Mr. Brochu noted students are coming back to school for just a Friday after the winter break and also the calendar reflects the Berlin Fair to be held on October 10 and the correct date is October 3.

VIII. ADD ITEM TO THE AGENDA CONCERNING VACANCY ON THE BOARD

Moved by Ms. Rochette, seconded by Mr. Puzio, to add an agenda item to discuss vacancy on the Board.

FAVOR: ALL

MOTION CARRIED: 7:0, including President Gary Brochu

A discussion took place regarding the vacancy on the Board as a result of Michelle Hartel's resignation, which has been made official.

IX. ADD ITEM TO THE AGENDA REGARDING AN UPDATE CONCERNING THE FACILITIES PLAN

Moved by Ms. Rochette, seconded by Ms. O'Donnell-Moss, to add an agenda item to discuss the Facilities Plan.

FAVOR: ALL

MOTION CARRIED: 7:0, including President Gary Brochu

Mr. Brochu reported on his meeting with Dr. Cicchetti and Mr. Czuchta last week concerning their discussion of the Facilities Plan and reported that the first item that needs to be completed to start this process moving is development of educational specifications, which will be forwarded to the Council for forwarding to the Building Commissioner. Mr. Czuchta reported on the makeup of this Committee, which will include a number of groups involved in the process. Mr. Czuchta reported that there is a very tight schedule in order to stay with the calendar for a submission to the State for June 2008. Mr. Czuchta reported that NESDEC has been contracted to help walk through the process and develop the specifications. Mr. Czuchta has spoke with NESDEC this date and NESDEC will provide a tentative calendar this Thursday to develop these specifications. Mr. Czuchta indicated NESDEC is aware of the June 1 deadline for completion of these specifications.

X. ADD ITEM TO THE AGENDA CONCERNING MCGEE MIDDLE SCHOOL FIELD TRIP

Moved by Ms. O'Donnell-Moss, seconded by Mr. Recck, to add the approval of the field trip agenda item to the agenda.

FAVOR: ALL

MOTION CARRIED: 7:0, including President Gary Brochu

The Board was provided with the field trip request of McGee Middle School Team 6B to travel to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts on Friday, March 23, 2007.

Moved by Ms. O'Donnell-Moss, seconded by Mr. Recck, to approve the field trip for Team 6B at McGee Middle School to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

FAVOR: ALL

MOTION CARRIED: 7:0, including President Gary Brochu

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Mr. Recck, seconded by Mr. Puzio, to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

FAVOR: ALL

MOTION CARRIED: 7:0, including President Gary Brochu

Respectfully submitted,

John M. Richards, Secretary, Berlin Board of Education