

BERLIN BOARD OF EDUCATION

May 14, 2007

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

Attendance: Gary Brochu
Julie Erickson
William Lutz
Diane Mancini Absent
Kathleen O'Donnell-Moss
Christopher Puzio
Anthony Recck Absent
John Richards
Rachel Rochette

Also in attendance: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Michael Cicchetti; 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; Dean of Students for McGee Middle School James Sachs; and Principal of Berlin High School George Synnott.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Brochu called the meeting to order at 7:09 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

Mr. Lutz reported interviews for the position of Literacy Coordinator will be conducted Tuesday.

Ms. Erickson reported on her attendance last week at Berlin High School's band and choral concert. She said holding the concert in the gym was another reminder of the need for a new high school. Ms. Erickson reported the custodial negotiations continue and another meeting is scheduled for Tuesday.

Ms. Rochette reported on the cafeteria staff negotiations and another meeting is scheduled in June.

Ms. O'Donnell-Moss reported on her attendance last week at Berlin High School's band and choral concert. Ms. O'Donnell-Moss reported the UpBeat town-wide picnic is scheduled for May 31, 2007 and encouraged all Board members to attend. Ms. O'Donnell-Moss reported the Peer Leadership Training weekend will take place this weekend at Camp Woodstock. Ms. O'Donnell-Moss reported the Berlin Education Council will meet on Thursday at 7:00 p.m.

Ms. Klebart reported that she and Ms. Gjerpen attended a workshop, sponsored by the State Department of Education, wherein the state math framework for kindergarten through Grade 5 was unveiled. Ms. Klebart also reiterated interviews for the Literacy Coordinator will be conducted Tuesday.

Mr. Czuchta reported the Town Technology Committee will meet this Thursday at 6:00 p.m. as a follow up to the Technology Bond, which was defeated, and discuss where to go from here with technology for both the Town and the Board of Education.

Dr. Cicchetti reported on the stipend document provided to the Board (this evening) as a follow up to the Board of Education Update the Board received last week. Dr. Cicchetti reported that Megan Sirois, second grade teacher at Hubbard School, was nominated by former student, Emily Gombotz, for Sam's Club Teacher of the Year and Emily's essay won. Ms. Sirois received a \$100 gift card for her classroom from Sam's Club, and the school received a check for \$1,000 to support education in the school. Dr. Cicchetti reported on his attendance at the Junior Prom this past Friday evening and commended the students for their behavior as there were no incidents at the prom.

Mr. Brochu reported on the recent pasta dinner organized by a group of high school students to raise funds for Darfur and genocide in Africa. Mr. Brochu reported that he, Dr. Cicchetti, Mayor Adam Salina and Town Manager Herman Middlebrooks, Jr. met with Connecticut's three legislative representatives to discuss legislative issues, specifically concerns with the change in reimbursement for school building projects and also parental choice for magnet schools.

III. SPECIAL PRESENTATION – TEACHER RECRUITMENT MATERIALS

Dr. Cicchetti presented the promotional materials that have been created for use at various education related events and conferences. The following students and staff members were featured in photographs utilized in the making of the promotional materials and were presented with a framed copy of the print to take home: students Marijane Ceruti, Amanda Francini, Taylor Jefferson, Elizabeth Long, Tristan Luddy, Samantha Shirley, Stephanie Strobino, Daniela Sznaj, and Katelyn Zarotney; staff members Lisa Daddona, Science-BHS; Joy Cooper, Social Studies-McGee; Julie DiCicco, Mathematics-BHS; Thomas Warburton, English-BHS; David Bosso, Social Studies-BHS; Christian Strickland, Grade 4-Griswold; Steven Matyczuk, Science/Soc. Studies-McGee; and Roszena Sutton, Supervisor of Special Education-district. Special thanks go to Paul Salina, David Evon, Kevin Cormack, Nancy Boccuzzio, Debbie Batista, Brian Benigni, James Sachs and Rena Klebart for their help in the creation of these materials.

IV. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

Nothing to report.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes
 - 1. Regular Meeting of April 23, 2007
- B. Payment of Bills – Period ending April 30, 2007
- C. Transfers

Roman Czuchta, Director of Business Operations, provided a sheet of transfers that represent year end adjustments to accounts.

D. Requests for Leaves of Absence

Catherine Plona, teacher of Language Arts at Catherine M. McGee Middle School has submitted a letter requesting an unpaid leave of absence for the 2007-2008 school year for childrearing purposes. Mrs. Plona is expecting the birth of her baby in July.

Shannon Felix, teacher of mathematics at Catherine M. McGee Middle School has submitted a letter requesting an unpaid leave of absence for the 2007-2008 school year for childrearing purposes. Mrs. Felix is expecting the birth of her baby in May.

E. Action Regarding Non-Renewal Notice

Due to a resignation, the District is able to extend Elizabeth Spinella's employment as a teacher in the Berlin Public Schools. It is, therefore, recommended to rescind the non-renewal notice issued to Elizabeth Spinella and offer her a contract for the 2007-2008 academic year.

Moved by Ms. O'Donnell-Moss, seconded by Mr. Richards, to approve the consent agenda as presented.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 6:0**

VI. INFORMATION AND REPORTS

A. Activity Fund Reports

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

These reports were noted with interest.

Mr. Richards commented on the net profit/loss as of June 30, 2006 for the Cafeteria Fund, inquiring if the net profit figure of \$19,376.06 should be placed in the right hand column as the last quarter of the current school year has not yet occurred. Mr. Richards commented on the net profit of \$19,376.06 as of June 30, 2006 and the net loss of \$12,497.76 as of March 31, 2007 and inquired of Mr. Czuchta of the current net profit or loss. Mr. Czuchta remarked the net loss as of March 31, 2007 is approximately \$32,000.00 as expenses are up and revenues are down. Mr. Richards questioned the (\$15,000) loss of revenue in the line item Lunch A-La-Carte, noting the previous meeting comments indicating loss of sales relating to the introduction of a low-fat cookie. Mr. Richards requested the breakdown of profit or loss for the Cafeteria Fund be broken down on a monthly basis.

A short break took place from 7:34 p.m. to 7:39 p.m.

B. McGee Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

On an annual basis, McGee Middle School disaggregates test data, looks at student performance and plans the next year's offerings. This year McGee offered several initiatives to address the issue of AYP or Annual Yearly Progress at McGee. SPRINT was offered as an after school program to everyone who scored proficient and lower on their CMTs. Support was provided in reading and math. Struggling readers were identified by CMT scores. Social Studies classes were divided by skill level. The purpose was to teach specific reading strategies using specialized as well as Social Studies materials - Reading in the Content Area (RICA). Rena Klebart, Brian Benigni and Margaret Butler reviewed a sample Connecticut Mastery Test Student Report and presented an overview, as well as answered questions from the Board, concerning these current initiatives, outlining each of the two programs that were offered; the programs' resources; participation in the programs at each of the grade levels; and the considerations for moving forward. Mr. Benigni shared with the Board a CMT Excel spreadsheet containing data as to the grade level, teacher, team, special education notation, CMT scores for Math, Reading and Writing as well as a column for participation in SPRINT and/or RICA for every student in the McGee Middle School. A handout of the presentation was provided to Board members.

C. English Language Learners (ELL) Report

This item has been postponed to the next Board meeting as Abby Hunting, ELL department chair, was unavailable.

D. Literacy Committee Report

Members of the district Literacy Committee have worked with Dr. Susan Deffenbaugh, a reading consultant with experience at the State Department of Education, to review existing instructional practices and materials. The committee has established grade-level objectives, which are aligned with the Literacy Framework established by the State Department of Education and the objectives established for the Connecticut Mastery Test. The Literacy Committee shared the literacy curriculum with elementary grade-level teams at the March 24th and March 30th professional development days and also worked with grade-level teams during release time on April 24th. Teachers have had an opportunity to review the literacy curriculum and make recommendations for their professional developments needs. Next steps will include development of grade-level assessments and continued professional development in support of literacy instruction. Ms. Klebart presented the Literacy Curriculum as well as answered questions from the Board. Ms. Klebart reviewed the principles that guided the committee's work; members of the committee; the "why" behind the committee's work; existing documents; standards; essential elements of a balanced literacy program; the general layout; format; curriculum revisions; next steps; vertical team areas of focus; professional development; and the reading consultants. A handout of the presentation was provided to Board members.

E. Status of Educational Specifications for the New High School

Administration and Board Committee Chairs reported on their meeting (earlier that afternoon) with representatives of NESDEC as to the status of preparing educational specifications for the new high school. Mr. Czuchta reported at the May 29, 2007 Board meeting NESDEC will present a PowerPoint presentation on a number of the areas discussed and areas that are unique to Berlin and the State. The

final report will be presented at the June 11 Board meeting, with anticipated action at the June 25 meeting.

VII. RECOMMENDED ACTION

A. Last Student Day for 2006-2007 School Year

Dr. Cicchetti reported that, in light of discussions with Cabinet and administrators, it is recommended that the last student day be moved from Monday, June 25, to Friday, June 22, which will remain a half-day for students and a full day for staff. Staff will be involved in planned activities on Monday, June 25, which will be a full day for staff. From 8:00 – 12:00, staff members at each of the elementary schools and the middle school will be involved in completing their review of the Continuous Improvement Plans. They will summarize their year end reports and begin to work on school and team goals for the coming school year based on their evaluation of student performance. Administrators at all levels will work with their staff on the Professional Growth and Evaluation Plan, helping teachers understand each of the phases and the forms included in the plan. The balance of the day will be devoted to closing out the school year. High school teachers will administer make-up exams to students, prepare quarter and semester grades, and/or resolve graduation and eligibility issues during the morning block. As with the elementary and middle school staff, the balance of the day will be devoted to closing out the school year.

Moved by Ms. Rochette, seconded by Mr. Puzio, to move the last student day of school for 2006-2007 from Monday, June 25, to Friday, June 22, which will remain a half-day for students and a full day for staff.

In response to Ms. Erickson's inquiry, Dr. Cicchetti stated that Friday, June 22, 2007, would be a half day for students since the last day of school has traditionally been a half day. June 22 will be a full day for teachers.

FAVOR: ALL

MOTION CARRIED: 7:0, including President Gary Brochu

B. Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) Mentor Candidates

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Rena Klebart presented the following candidates for certification in the BEST program: Lynn Addamo, Ed Beaupre, Mark Centurelli, Eileen Cutler, Elijah Clapp, Leonilda DiTomasso, Teresa Dorsey, Wendy Gemmell, Elizabeth Guidone, Kristin Kennedy, Ruth Kidwell, Adam Leonard, Kathy Lotko, Theodore Mangi, Steve Matyczyk, Meghan Nardelli, Shawn Pelletier, Christina Reilly-Fazzina, Scott Rossi, Brendan Rush, David Scannell, Marilyn Scanlon White, Corinne Terlecky, Kim Waldron, and Jan Zagorski. Once trained, these teachers will be eligible to serve as cooperating teachers for student teachers and mentors for our new hires. Ms. Klebart provided a listing of the teachers with their school and assignment.

Moved by Mr. Puzio, seconded by Ms. Erickson, to approve the Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) candidates as presented.

Mr. Richards requested a chart of how many BEST qualified teachers are at each school as well as the listing of the teachers for the past two years. Dr. Cicchetti responded that this information would be included in a future Board Update.

FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 6:0

C. Setting of the 2007-2008 Board of Education Operating Budget

Moved by Mr. Richards, seconded by Ms. O'Donnell-Moss, that the Board of Education adopt an Operating Budget for 2007-2008 in the amount of \$34,354,578.

Mr. Richards noted the Operating Budget approved in the minutes is not the figure that will be approved this evening. This figure for the Operating Budget is \$60,000 less than what was approved earlier this year and puts the Board in harmony with what was recently approved by the Town and incorporates the work the Board did with the Council.

FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 7:0, including President Gary Brochu

VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 9:00 p.m., a motion was made by Ms. Erickson, seconded by Mr. Lutz, to go into Executive Session to discuss materials relative to negotiations.

FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 6:0

In attendance for Executive Session were Board members Brochu, Erickson, Lutz, O'Donnell-Moss, Puzio, Richards and Rochette. In addition, Dr. Cicchetti and Mr. Czuchta were present.

At 9:35 p.m., a motion was made by Ms. Rochette, seconded by Ms. O'Donnell-Moss, to return to regular session.

FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 6:0

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Mr. Puzio, seconded by Ms. Erickson, to adjourn the meeting at 9:36 p.m.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 6:0**

Respectfully submitted,

John M. Richards, Secretary
Berlin Board of Education

(Orig: 5/15/07 JMR; bjd; Supt review done 5/23/07; JMR final revision done 5/24/07)