

BERLIN BOARD OF EDUCATION

January 16, 2008

MINUTES

SPECIAL MEETING

Attendance: Gary Brochu
Julie Erickson
Michelle Hartel
Gary Lukens
William Lutz
Kathleen O'Donnell-Moss
Christopher Puzio
Anthony Recck
John Richards

Deparated at 7:47 p.m.
Arrived at 7:14 p.m.
Deparated at 8:25 p.m.

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; Director of Human Resources Joseph Costa; Principal of McGee Middle School Brian Benigni; Principal of Berlin High School George Synnott; and Administrative Intern at Berlin High School Cheryl Gonzalez.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Brochu called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. in the Board of Education ("the Board") meeting room at 238 Kensington Road, Berlin, CT.

II. 2008-2009 PROPOSED BUDGET PRESENTATION

A. Secondary Principals' Budget Presentations

Staffing: Mr. Synnott and Mr. Benigni confirmed that there are no staffing requests for Berlin High School and McGee for this budget year. They discussed the status of the current staffing as well as staffing for next year. Mr. Synnott discussed the possibility of a revised schedule for the high school for next year as the current one is not conducive to collaboration and does not allow students to take advantage of other programs off site because of its rotation. Mr. Synnott discussed the high school's study of an alternative program for at-risk regular education students.

Student Support: Mr. Synnott is requesting an Assistant Coach for Men's Swimming. Currently, the men's swimming and diving team has one head coach, whose primary responsibility is to oversee the swimming component of the program. An assistant coach is needed to work with the divers, especially since diving practices are often held in a different location than swimming. This additional coach would address both an instructional and supervisory need for the team.

Mr. Synnott is also requesting an Assistant Coach for Cross Country. Currently, there is one head coach for the cross country team. With the current participation level at approximately 30 athletes, there is an instructional and supervisory need for the team to have an assistant coach.

Regarding the number of sports teams offered and the breakdown for males and females, Dr. Cicchetti indicated that the district might be at a good point to conduct a Title IX review of such offerings.

Mr. Benigni is requesting a 1.0 FTE Math Instructional Support Teacher. This position will focus on the population of students who are identified as testing below goal for the Connecticut Mastery

Test. At present, students at Willard, Griswold and Hubbard Elementary Schools and McGee Middle School are supported by two math instructional support teachers. This additional math support teacher would allow the district to provide full-time math instruction support at McGee.

Mr. Benigni discussed the request for a 1.0 FTE Remedial Reading/Writing Teacher for the high school and McGee. This position will also focus on the population of students who are identified as testing below goal for the Connecticut Mastery Test. At present, the high school and middle school each have 1.5 FTE reading teachers to support their at-risk readers. This additional remedial reading/writing teacher would increase that to 2.0 FTE teachers at each building. The reading/writing teachers would continue their work with at-risk students through direct remedial instruction. Two teachers each for McGee and Berlin High School would also allow direct work with content area teachers, providing model lesson and reading strategies to help teachers apply those strategies to their units of instruction to strengthen student comprehension.

Mr. Benigni remarked with the reconfiguration of special education and with these additional student support resources in reading and math, Berlin will be able to provide support to any student that tests below goal.

Dr. Cicchetti will provide the Board with a chart for each school, showing the current level of service for reading and math and the projected level of service with these additional positions.

Teaching and Learning: Principal Synnott discussed the need for 4.0 Duty Paraprofessionals. Research repeatedly points to the benefits of common planning and time and opportunities for professional conversations and collaboration. Duty Paraprofessionals will assume non-teaching supervisory responsibilities, allowing teachers who currently assume these responsibilities to schedule additional departmental common planning time. Teachers will gain time for professional collaboration and communication, reducing teacher isolation and increasing opportunities for teams to analyze student work and develop model lessons based on shared experiences and best practices.

Mr. Benigni had no teaching and learning requests for McGee for next budget year.

Technology: Mr. Synnott expressed concern that the high school's computers are aging and not being replaced at the rate they should. Mr. Synnott is requesting replacement of fifty computers. Mr. Synnott is requesting an expansion of the Smartboard program introduced last year in the Math Department for the Science Department.

Mr. Benigni is requesting that the computers at McGee be replaced on a five year cycle. Mr. Benigni is requesting replacement of forty-seven computers. Mr. Benigni is also requesting six mobile computer labs.

B. Site and Building

Mr. Czuchta presented to the Board the Site and Building Maintenance Budget and provided Board members with a complete itemization for same. The Site and Building Budget is not part of the Board's Operational Budget. Mr. Czuchta indicated the Site and Building Maintenance Budget has an increase of \$1,101,790. Major items requested in the 2008-2009 budget include 2007-2008 requests contained in the recently-defeated bonding package such as the Griswold parking lot improvements (\$200,000); buzz-in entry systems (\$50,000); a reconfigured main office entry for McGee (\$25,000); and phone and intercom upgrades for all elementary schools (\$95,000). Additionally, \$237,740 has been requested to install keyless entry systems at all the schools and \$165,000 for the replacement of all floor tile on the first floor of the McGee addition as the floor system and moisture control measures are in failure.

Mr. Czuchta reported that the buzz-in entry systems for the five schools has been moved forward by the Town Council in order to receive a fifty percent reimbursement associated with a grant awarded to the Berlin Police Department. If the project is accomplished, the Site and Building Maintenance Budget will be reduced accordingly. Mr. Czuchta indicated this is not finished as a Town hearing may have to take place.

C. Capital Equipment Budget

Mr. Czuchta presented to the Board the Capital Equipment Budget and provided Board members with a complete itemization for same. The Capital Equipment Budget also is not part of the Board's Operational Budget. Mr. Czuchta indicated the Capital Equipment Budget has an increase of \$979,800. Major categories comprising the 2008-2009 request include computers/technology (\$610,500); band uniforms (\$100,000); vehicles (\$77,000); and furniture (\$92,700). Of the \$610,500 requested for technology, approximately \$275,000 is to replace existing hardware as part of a five year replacement cycle; \$150,000 is for mobile computer labs; \$100,000 for interactive white board systems; and \$78,000 for laptops that teachers can use on site as well as at home.

III. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Ms. O'Donnell-Moss, seconded by Ms. Erickson, to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Hartel, Secretary, Berlin Board of Education