

WINDHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION  
WILLIMANTIC, CONNECTICUT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES  
May 10, 2017

BOARD PRESENT: Vice-chair Dr. Sewall, Secretary Dr. Gomez, Ms. Lambert, Mr. French, Ms. Lessard, Mr. Montalvo

BOARD ABSENT: Chair Ms. Osuba, Mr. Kalajian, Mr. Flores-Alvarez

ADMINISTRATION

PRESENT: Assistant Superintendent Dr. Youngberg, Interim Assistant Superintendent Mr. Chaffin, Directors: Ms. Beghetto, Ms. Chatey, Mr. Pabon, Mr. Johnson

STUDENT

REPRESENTATIVES: None

OTHERS PRESENT: General public, staff, administrators, news media

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Dr. Sewall called the May 10, 2017 Board of Education meeting to order at 7:05pm in the Windham High School Library Media Center.

PLEDGE OF ALLIEGIANCE

Mr. French led the Board and the Public in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES

April 5, 2017 Board of Education Meeting Minutes (Ref.1)

April 19, 2017 Board of Education Workshop Minutes (Ref. 1A)

**The April 5, 2017 and April 19, 2017 Board of Education meeting minutes were approved as submitted.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bill Stover spoke indicating that he was representing the K-12 students, parents, employees and community partners of the Before and After School Program. They would like to express their gratitude to the Board of Education for including funding for their project in the Board of Education budget. At this time, only one program (WMS Puentes) has guaranteed funding. There are several grants pending. Parent fees contribute \$120,000 (done on a sliding scale) annually to support the program. There is a waiting list for students to participate. Dr. Sewall

also thanked the Board of Finance for their agreement to provide funding if necessary from the uncommitted fund balance.

Barbara S. Popeleski of Windham appeared to speak on behalf of the Torres Family but decided to withhold comment at this time. She indicated that she taught at Natchaug for 34 years.

Israel Torres and Joselyn Torres, parents, chose to withhold comment at this time due to new information that they received regarding the STEM Academy lottery.

John French spoke regarding transparency and board policy regarding public comment. He urged the Board to allow people to speak and indicated that he was not present when the vote was taken to modify the policy with regard to public comment.

Dr. Gracia asked Mr. and Mrs. Torres to call her on Thursday to further discuss their concerns.

#### PRESENTATION – RESULTS OF DMG STUDY

Ms. Diane Ullman presented the results of the study that was commissioned regarding supporting struggling students and the coaching model. She reviewed the process and advised that DMG spoke to approximately 200 individuals in the District. The plan is to give the District a plan to implement a course of work. The goal is to work on systems and strategies.

She indicated that the diagnostic stage has been completed. The next steps are to align key opportunities, define a vision for success and provide an implementation plan to be ready for the start of the next school year. Ms. Ullman said the study revealed the following strengths of the District: committed staff members, recognition of coaching model, commitment to support native Spanish speakers, a desire to strive for continuous improvement, and support for students with significant disabilities.

Ms. Ullman indicated the following opportunities for improvement were identified: refine the coaching program structure (there needs to be coherence), refine approach and vision for multi-tiered system support, provide consistent access to extra instructional time, ensure intervention for students are provided by staff with deep content expertise and training, develop a coordinated system of social, emotional and behavioral supports. The District leadership has determined that the focus will be put on the first two opportunities. Dr. Garcia will work on a vision and the goal is to have changes in place for students by the Fall.

Ms. Lambert inquired what grades the study covered and was advised that it was a K-12 initiative. Dr. Sewall asked about the budget ramifications and Ms. Ullman stated that the goal is to stay within the resources that the District already possesses. Ms. Lessard asked if the priorities would be K-12 and was advised that this would be the case.

Dr. Garcia thanked Ms. Ullman and DMG for a job well done.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

### Recognitions

#### Invention Convention

Dr. Garcia recognized that 40 students from C.H. Barrows STEM Academy were selected to progress to the state competition from the regional Invention Convention. Nearly half of all students that participated from Barrows.

#### CABE/CAPSS Convention Presentation

The students from the Early College Opportunity Program have been asked once again to present at the CABE/CAPSS Convention in November.

#### Athletic Accomplishments

Dr. Garcia extended congratulations to high school students, Travis Shashok and Alex Korczynski for their athletic accomplishments in shotput/discus/javelin and track.

#### Afterschool Art and Essay Contest

The Connecticut After School network notified Windham Middle School that three students were named winners in the After School Art and Essay Contest. Michelle Quinoz-Salgado, Alondra Bonano, and Jaden Jusino will receive awards and prizes.

#### Technology Funds

Dr. Garcia thanked the students at Mansfield Middle School who raised money to provide technology for Windham Middle School.

#### Windham Early College Opportunity Fixer-Upper Real Estate Challenge

The ECO program held a great event with presentations from students. This was a community-based project and the students were well prepared. The winners of the challenge were the Freshmen Connection team. Dr. Garcia congratulated all the students that participated.

### Windham Public Schools Family & Community Expo

This year's Expo will take place on May 20. Last year there were over 800 attendees. Dr. Garcia acknowledged Mr. Stover, Ms. Chatey and all the family liaisons for their hard work in preparing for this year's event. The Expo brings together a wide variety of community organizations and businesses.

### State Assessment Update

DMT and SBAC testing have begun and will be completed by May 26. Windham High School had over 95% of 11<sup>th</sup> grade students participate in the SAT testing.

### Principal Search – Natchaug School

The search has begun for a principal. The posting was closed on April 21 and there were 22 applicants for the position.

### Orientation

Both the High School and the Middle School will be holding orientation sessions for the students who will be transitioning this year (5<sup>th</sup> grade and 8<sup>th</sup> grade). The middle school will be offering sessions two times a day which will include an opportunity for parents to join students at either session. There will also be two workshops held for parents for students transitioning into middle school.

The orientation at the high school will include lunch followed by a series of informative experiences designed to smooth the transition to high school. Parents will be invited to attend an informational session that evening along with their child.

### Kindergarten Screener

Dr. Youngberg and her staff have been working on a much more comprehensive screener than was utilized in the past. This will provide information regarding our youngest students earlier in the process.

### State Review of the Food Services Program

The Connecticut State Department of Education Bureau of Health and Nutrition will be conducting an administrative review of the Food Services Department beginning on June 6, 2017.

### FIRST READING OF REVISED BOARD POLICY NO. 6172 ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

This is the first reading of the revised policy 6172 Alternative Education Programs. This will replace the present policy. Dr. Sewall remarked that there is some flexibility and that there is a requirement of 900 hours of instruction. Dr. Garcia indicated that the District will be using a blended model and will be submitting an RFQ.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Dr. Sewall advised that the Finance and Audit Committee met two weeks prior to the board meeting. He also stated that there were fund transfers that were on the agenda. The committee reviewed the third quarter reports at their meeting and there are some shortfalls that need to be made up.

### SCHOOL PLANNING AND DESIGN COMMITTEE

Ms. Lambert reported that she would like to add approval of well projects to the agenda. The committee has finished and the wells are complete. The project required an extra 10% from the Town Council.

**Motion by Mr. Montalvo, seconded by Dr. Gomez that the approval of the Well projects as completed be added to the agenda as Action Item #6.**

**Motion is approved unanimously.**

Ms. Lambert indicated that the District has been advised that the Town will not be renewing the District's lease on the Kramer Building. The School Planning and Design Committee began discussions regarding the relocation of the Early Childhood Center and the staff of Central Office. The move must be complete by August 2018 and will be impacted by the changes at the high school and the moving of the Companeros Program. Dr. Sewall asked about the financial impact and stated he assumed this would be absorbed by the Town. Ms. Lambert also noted that there was always a plan to have a swing space in the District. This move will have an impact on the master plan. The most crucial move will be to relocate the preschool as there are many very specific requirements for a building housing these students.

The project regarding the future of the high school is moving forward. There is a deadline of July 1 to have a plan in place in order to secure the maximum funding. Dr. Garcia will present the Educational Specification in June and the town will have the necessary resolutions on June 6, 2017.

#### POLICY COMMITTEE

Dr. Garcia reported that the Policy Committee met and introduced the changes to the Alternative Education Policy. Other policies were reviewed and will be presented at a later date.

#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee has not met and their meeting for May 11 is cancelled.

#### ACTION ITEMS

Recommended approval of second reading of policy no. 6142.101 STUDENT WELLNESS POLICY (Ref. 2)

**Motion by Ms. Lambert, seconded by Mr. Montalvo that the board approve the revisions to Board Student Wellness Policy #6141.101 presented for first reading on April 10, 2017.**

Mr. French asked that the wording be changed to state that the beverages not in compliance with the policy would not be provided by the school.

**Motion amended by Ms. Lambert, seconded by Mr. Montalvo to revise the wording in the policy to reflect that beverages not in compliance with the policy would not be provided by the school.**

**Motion is approved unanimously.**

Recommended approval of acceptance of donation to Music Department (Ref. 3)

**Motion by Ms. Lambert, seconded by Ms. Lessard that the board approve acceptance of a donation of \$1,000 from Travelers to the Music Department.**

**Motion is approved unanimously.**

Recommended approval of budget transfers (Ref. 4)

**Motion by Mr. Montalvo, seconded by Mr. French that the board approve budget transfers as recommended by the Finance and Audit Committee.**

**Motion is approved unanimously.**

Recommended approval of IDEA Grant Application Submission (Ref. 5)

**Motion by Ms. Lambert, seconded by Ms. Lessard that the board approve the submission of the IDEA grant application for the school year 2017-2018.**

**Motion is approved unanimously**

Recommended approval of VCT removal plans at Windham Center School and North Windham School.

**Motion by Ms. Lessard, seconded by Ms. Lambert to approve the VCT removal plans at Windham Center School and North Windham School.**

Ms. Lambert clarified that the old tiles would be removed and the concrete polished. The District will seek reimbursement and the town will create a renovation committee for the abatement. The project will take place during the summer.

**Motion is approved unanimously.**

**Motion by Mr. French, seconded by Mr. Montalvo that the Board approve of the Well projects as completed.**

**Motion is approved unanimously.**

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no further public comment.

#### Executive Session

**Motion of Ms. Lambert seconded by Mr. Montalvo that the Board of Education enter into executive session at 8:10pm for the discussion of exempt documents pertaining to personnel matters.**

Mr. French indicated that he felt there was a need for more specific information on the Board agenda in order to move into Executive Session. Ms. Lambert said that personnel matters cannot be articulated on the agenda. Mr. French suggested that an attorney give an opinion on this matter.

Mr. Johnson addressed the Board and indicated that he had received a letter indicating his position might be discussed in executive session and he asked that the discussion take place in open session. Dr. Garcia indicated that the discussion was a matter of position. She indicated that the District received notice from the town that the finance director was being reclassified

as an employee of the town only. Therefore, the District does not technically have a business manager which is violation of Connecticut law. Mr. Johnson indicated that he works 60% of his time for the District.

A discussion followed regarding whether by having the position reclassified, Mr. Johnson was no longer an employee of the District.

**Motion by Mr. French seconded by Ms. Lambert that an approval of the extension of Mr. Johnson's contract as Finance Director to October 2017, retroactive to October 2016, be added to the agenda.**

**In Favor: Ms. Lessard, Mr. Montalvo, Ms. Lambert, Mr. French**  
**Abstained: Dr. Gomez**

**Motion is approved.**

**Motion by Mr. French seconded by Ms. Lambert that the Board approve the extension of Mr. Johnson's contract as Finance Director to October 1, 2017, retroactive to October 1, 2016.**

Discussion followed with regard to reclassification and Mr. Johnson's status as an employee of the District.

Mr. French asked that the vote be called.

**Motion by Mr. French seconded by Ms. Lambert that the Motion be amended to state that the Board will direct the Superintendent to prepare a contract extending Mr. Johnson's contract to October 1, 2017 retroactive to October 1, 2016.**

The Board instructed the Superintendent to prepare a contract and bring it back to the Board.

**In Favor: Ms. Lessard, Mr. Montalvo, Ms. Lambert, Mr. French**  
**Abstained: Dr. Gomez**

**Motion is approved.**

There were no matters for executive session.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion by Ms. Lambert, seconded by Mr. French that the board adjourn its meeting at 9:17pm.**

**Motion is unanimously approved.**

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Jaime Gomez, Secretary