

WINDHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION
WILLIMANTIC, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES
May 24, 2017

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

BOARD ABSENT: Chair Ms. Osuba

ADMINISTRATION

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

STUDENT

REPRESENTATIVES: None

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

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Dr. Sewall called the May 24, 2017 Board of Education workshop 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.

Dr. Garcia thanked the many volunteers, members of the Board of Education and staff who worked hard to support the passing of the school budget.

PRESENTATION – ECO Workplace Learning Project

Mr. Randall Prose, High School Teacher, and students from the winning team in the Fixer Upper Challenge reported on the ECO Workforce Learning Project. The students presented their project and explained that they received great support from community partners and some experts from within the school system. They felt it taught them how to be strategic, work collaboratively and create a viable project.

PRESENTATION – Capacity and Coherence Audit

Mr. Richard Lemons and Mr. Robert Henry from the Connecticut Center for School Change presented the outcomes of the Capacity and Coherence Study. The study was done under the direction of LEAD Connecticut. They commended the Superintendent for taking this step to

analyze systems. It was underwritten by the State Board of Education. There were multiple sources of data utilized to form their trends and patterns. They found that there was a relatively small, but critical, number of priorities. They also found that the staff largely believes the process is moving the District forward. There is a true sense of urgency for general improvement in the District. There are some issues of lack of trust but much of it has historical roots. Dr. Garcia outlined the next steps to use the study to move the District forward.

Dr. Gomez inquired as to which were the 3 most critical areas facing the District. The team identified: Finding teachers, retaining top talent and coaching teachers to improve. Dr. Sewall remarked that the change has been seven years in the making and the trajectory is going in the right direction and will continue to grow stronger with more stable leadership.

Dr. Sewall thanked Mr. Lemons and Mr. Henry for their work.

ACTION ITEMS

Moved to after the executive session.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Israel Torres, resident and parent, spoke to the Board regarding an issue surrounding the Barrows lottery. Dr. Sewall said that the Board would review the policy and make a decision as to whether there needs to be an adjustment to the policy.

Ms. Acosta-Torres, parent, added her comments regarding the Barrows lottery and passed out information to the Board regarding issues concerning her son's placement in the lottery due to use of staff preference.

Dr. Sewall noted that the matter of the Barrows Lottery would be referred to the Policy Committee.

Barbara S. Popeleski of Windham appeared to speak on behalf of the Torres Family and asked the Board to consider the issue regarding the lottery process to help this family.

Nicole Bay, parent and teacher, spoke regarding the Companeros program and concerns that decisions had been made regarding moving the program without sufficient parent input. Mr. Kalajian informed Ms. Bay that the School Planning and Design Committee would be discussing this program at their meeting and invited Ms. Bay to attend.

Dr. Garcia explained the process that was followed with regard to the Barrows Lottery. Dr. Gomez expressed a desire for the Board to establish a protocol for the Board to be able to listen to parent issues. Mr. French would like to have Board Comments added to the board agenda going forward.

Executive Session

Motion of Ms. Lambert seconded by Mr. French that the Board of Education enter into executive session at 8:45pm for the discussion of information pertaining to personnel assignments in schools.

Dr. Sewall reconvened the regular session at 9:17pm.

Motion by Mr. Kalajian seconded by Ms. Lambert that the Board approve the appointments and accept the resignations as recommended.

There was discussion regarding the loss of Ms. Smith, Nurse at Sweeney School, and Jessica Goldfarb, Math Teacher at the High School

The Motion is passed unanimously.

Dr. Garcia shared the Ed Specs for the high school and noted that they would need to be approved by the Board of Education at the next meeting for reimbursement to remain at the maximum level. Mr. Kalajian reminded the Superintendent that the matter needs to be put on the Town Council agenda. Dr. Garcia will contact the Mayor. Mr. Kalajian noted that, given the present economic climate, it might not be a good time to pursue the project. Dr. Sewall asked that it be an item on the June 7 meeting agenda. The report from the RFQ process should be ready early next week. It was agreed it would be presented to the board prior to the June 7 meeting at a special meeting on the board on June 1.

Mr. French asked for an update regarding QVCC. Dr. Garcia responded that the District could only provide space when District classes were not in session.

Motion by Mr. French seconded by Ms. Lambert that the Board add discussion of the High School Ed Specs to the agenda.

The Motion is passed unanimously.

Dr. Garcia asked for clarification from the Planning and Design Committee. Dr. Gomez said the Board needs to have the cost projections first and also listen to the community.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr. Montalvo, seconded by Mr. Flores-Alvarez that the board adjourn its meeting at 9:47pm.

Motion is unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Jaime Gomez, Secretary