

WINDHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION
WILLIMANTIC, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES
January 11, 2017

BOARD PRESENT: Chair Mrs. Osuba, Vice-chair Dr. Sewall, Mr. Kalajian, Mrs. Lambert, Mr. French, Mrs. Lessard

BOARD ABSENT: Secretary Dr. Gomez, Mr. Flores-Alvarez, Mr. Montalvo

ADMINISTRATION

PRESENT: Superintendent Patricia Garcia, Assistant Superintendents Tracy Youngberg and William Chaffin; Directors: Ms. Beghetto, Mr. Pabón

STUDENT

REPRESENTATIVES: None

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

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Mrs. Osuba called the January 11, 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

December 7, 2016 Board of Education Meeting Minutes (Ref.1)

December 14, 2016 Board of Education Meeting Minutes (Ref. 1A)

The December 7, 2016 and December 14, 2016 Board of Education meeting minutes were approved as submitted.

Conversation with State Legislators

Rep. Susan Johnson, Rep. Linda Orange and Senator Mae Flexer appeared before the Board to discuss what the legislature might do this session to help with the goals of the Windham School District. Mrs. Osuba stated that there is an issue with the ECS formula as it relates to communities such as Windham. Rep. Johnson indicated that there isn't a problem with the formula but how it is being applied. She encouraged the Board of Education members to get together with other Alliance Districts and present their case at the Capital as a united front. Mr. Kalajian posed the question regarding the State's assistance in support of regionalization. The panel noted that the State is looking at ways to bring schools up to date while conserving

funding. Barrows was cited as a good example of how the state is encouraging regionalization as the school has 22 sending towns. The State is encouraging renovation as opposed to building schools.

Dr. Sewall inquired about how the State could help to utilize the funding that the District already has in place, such as assisting in the hiring of teachers from outside of Connecticut or assisting those teachers who speak Spanish but cannot get certified. Mr. Pabón spoke to the District's need to hire speech pathologists. He said there is at least one needed at each school. Dr. Garcia said that the District has lost at least two bilingual speech pathologists due to the struggle to get certified. Rep. Orange said they should look into the certification process and also the policy on reciprocity with other States. Senator Flexer asked if it would be possible for the District to provide a few examples of the issues for certification and reciprocity. Mr. Pabón will supply the information to the panel.

Dr. Garcia indicated that she would bring the panel's suggestion for a united front to the Alliance Caucus. She asked that the panel make a strong case for Alliance funding for the present budget. Dr. Garcia also said that there are two new mandates, the new graduation requirements and the provision for the District to offer alternative education for expelled students, which are putting a great burden on the District. The panel indicated that these are concerns that they hear from other districts. Dr. Garcia also asked for support of the local community college and, particularly the ECO program. These are a huge benefit to our students. Senator Flexer indicated that this matter is top priority. She said that there will be an increase in the number of courses and focus on the Willimantic Center and open recruitment for QVCC. The Advanced Manufacturing Program at QVCC will be getting new equipment for the Willimantic Center and this will allow more students to enter the program.

Dr. Sewall stated that significant progress is being made and soon Windham schools may not be in the bottom 30. This will create a \$2,000,000 hole in the budget from State funding and, as such, is a major concern. Senator Flexer said that there is an opportunity to include in the funding formula, not only success of students, but demographics and economics.

The panel told the Board that they are open to any suggestions the Board may have and members should feel free to contact them at any time. Mrs. Lambert inquired whether the members of the panel might be able to supply the Board notice when a bill impacting education is being considered. Rep. Johnson indicated that the process is complex and that it is not practical to advise the Board on each bill. She also commented that the Board encourage CABA to examine its vision for Connecticut which has not changed although Connecticut has changed.

Mrs. Osuba thanked the panel.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mary Gallucci, resident and parent, expressed her concerns regarding easing the certification process for teachers. She feels that programs that fast-track certification would not be beneficial in obtaining quality teachers. She also expressed her concern over the RFQ for the

high school. She would like to have more input on the process by the High School SGC. She does not want the matter given over to the Board of Finance and feels that the high school serves as a community center and, as such, should not be closed.

Varun Khattar, UCONN Graduate and former volunteer at Windham Middle School, and Stephanie Marquez invited the Board members to attend two upcoming events regarding Willimantic as a sanctuary city. There will be a rally and march on January 20 at 3:30pm beginning at Jillson Square. The proposition will be before the Town Council on January 17. They encouraged all Board members and other present to attend.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Recognitions

Book Reading Program

Andrew McNamar, a teacher at Windham Middle School, is commended for leading a voluntary monthly book club using Eric Jensen's book, *Engaging Students with Poverty in Mind: Practical Strategies for Raising Achievement*. The first meeting of the club, which will be made up of up to 20 teachers, coaches and administrators, will take place on February 22.

Boys Soccer Team

For the first time in over 40 years, the Windham High School's Boys' Soccer Team was awarded a sportsmanship award, the 2016 ECSOA Francis E. Geissler Sportsmanship Award for Boys.

Community Forum

The District will hold its first Community Forum regarding the 2017-2018 School budget on January 17 at 6pm at Windham Middle School. School principals are meeting with the School Governance Councils to discuss the schools' budgets. All are invited. Mrs. Lambert inquired about the process for setting priorities for the budget. Dr. Garcia explained that the priorities are set from information gathered from many sources. The upcoming forum will provide an opportunity to discuss the strategic plan with the community and hear their input.

Math Initiative

Last year, the District began a reading initiative. This program was very successful. This year, the district will embark on a K-12 math initiative.

NGSS Assessment

The Connecticut State Board of Education adopted the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Effective 2018-2019, there will be a new standard. The transition plan was provided in the Board's meeting packet. The move provides for more emphasis on critical thinking. Due to the new mandate, changes to the social studies curriculum at the elementary level is being put on hold.

Compañeros Program and Charles H. Barrows STEM Academy Lotteries

The lottery application process for the Compañeros Program and Charles H. Barrows STEM Academy are open. On January 17, there will be an open house at the STEM Academy. The lottery will take place on March 29.

Proposed State Budget Cuts

The State Department of Education announced that there will be funding cut from the Alliance budget. The Superintendent and her staff are working to work with the budget to provide for the loss of funding. Every effort will be made to keep these cuts from the classroom.

Revised Forms

There are two forms that are being used in the District that required revision. The first form is the Field Trip Request form. Additional information has been added to the form to ensure that the principals verify that there is adequate funding available for field trips prior to authorization.

The second form is a new form to handle the confirmation that members of the School Governance Councils have had an opportunity to see the individual school budgets and offer suggestions to the principals. Mrs. Osuba asked if the SGC review process was on track to be completed on time. Dr. Garcia stated that she will attend the SGC meetings and hopes that each will have an opportunity to review the budget.

First Reading of Policies

The Policy Committee presented the following policies for first reading: *Policy #5112.4 Attendance and Truancy Policy*. Dr. Garcia explained that these changes were made to keep the District in Compliance with State and Federal regulations.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

POLICY COMMITTEE

In Mr. Flores-Alvarez' absence, Dr. Garcia reported that the Policy Committee met and brought forward the three policy revisions presented at this meeting.

FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Dr. Sewall advised that the committee met and had some budget transfers to be approved. He also stated that the committee looked at the status of the budget preparation which is on schedule. The Chair and the Superintendent reported on the Town Council meeting held last week. The formation of an Ad Hoc Committee on Financial Consolidation will go to the Town Council and the Board of Education in February. Mrs. Lambert asked that all budget transfers be added to the Board packet and appear as an agenda item.

Motion by Ms. Lessard, seconded by Dr. Sewall that the board add approval of the budget transfers as recommended by the Finance and Audit Committee to the agenda.

Motion is unanimously approved

SCHOOL PLANNING AND DESIGN COMMITTEE

Mr. Kalajian reported that the committee met and discussed the K-8 Dual Language program. The committee will work on determining where it will fit, perhaps at Windham Middle School. The wells are in operation and the issue of a faint odor in the water has been addressed. The roof project at Windham Middle School is nearing completion with a few outstanding items. Likewise, the power connection between Windham Middle School and Sweeney Elementary School is working. The RFQ for the High School Study has been awarded and an ad hoc committee will answer any questions. The data from the study will be shared with the public, Town Council, Finance Committee, and Board of Education.

Wayne Donaldson should be commended for saving the District a consideration amount of money by utilizing a less expensive filtration system during the well project.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Mrs. Osuba said the committee has met and they discuss the High School Study RFQ, the budget decrease, the goal of the strategic plan, and the K-8 Compañeros program.

ACTION ITEMS

Policy Revisions (Ref. 2 and 2a)

Motion by Dr. Sewall, seconded by Mrs. Lessard that the board approve the revisions to School Discipline Policy presented for first reading on December 7, 2016.

For: Vice-chair Dr. Sewall, Mrs. Lambert, Mr. French, Mrs. Lessard

Abstention: Mr. Kalajian

Motion is approved.

Motion by Dr. Sewall, seconded by Mr. French that the board approve the revisions to Policy #5114.2 Suspension from Interscholastic Athletics presented for first reading on December 7, 2016.

Since the first reading the policy has been revised to insert as #3 under definitions:

3. Probation: Any Student who has a grade point average lower than 2.0 shall be considered on probation. Probationary status allows the student-athlete to practice and play while attending the mandatory instructional tutoring sessions. Students on probation are required to attend the instructional tutoring sessions each week. Attendance is mandatory and will be monitored by the athletic director. Failure to attend the tutoring sessions will result in the student athlete being suspended from participating in team activities. Student athletes who are on probation must attend the tutoring sessions twice a week whether they are active in any given season or not until the cumulative GPA is 2.0 or above.

The following paragraphs will replace paragraph 3 and 4 under "Additional Guidelines": For the classes of 2017 and 2018, any student-athlete who completes the year with a grade point average lower than 2.0 shall begin the following year on probation. In the next marking period, the student must attain a GPA of 2.0 to be eligible to participate. If the marking period GPA is higher than 2.0, but the cumulative GPS is less than 2.0, that student will be suspended from

participating in team activities until the marking period GPA is 2.0 or greater. The student will remain on probation until the cumulative GPA is 2.0 or greater.

Beginning with the class of 2019, the cumulative GPA of 2.0 or greater must be maintained for the student-athlete to participate. If the cumulative GPA falls below 2.0, the student will be on probation for one marking period while being allowed to continue to participate. If the cumulative GPA remains below 2.0 after the one marking period probation period, the student will be suspended from participating in team activities until the cumulative GPA is 2.0 or above.

Motion is unanimously approved.

Personnel Recommendations (Ref. 3)

Motion by Ms. Lessard, seconded by Dr. Sewall, that the Board of Education accept the following resignations as recommended:

- **Bernard Barile, .4 FTE School Psychologist at Windham Center School effective December 30, 2016**
- **Michael Muzykoski, Head Custodian at Natchaug School effective August 2, 2017 for the purpose of retirement**

Motion is unanimously approved

Motion by Mr. French, seconded by Dr. Sewall that the Board of Education approve the budget transfers as recommended by the Finance and Audit Committee.

For: Vice-chair Dr. Sewall, Mr. Kalajian, Mr. French, Mrs. Lessard

Abstention: Mrs. Lambert

Motion is approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no further public comment.

Executive Session

There was no Executive Session

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr. French, seconded by Dr. Sewall, that the Board adjourn its meeting at 8:30 PM.

Motion is unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Murphy Sewall, Vice Chair