

WINDHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION  
WILLIMANTIC, CONNECTICUT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES  
November 15, 2017

BOARD PRESENT: Interim-chair Dr. Sewall, Secretary Dr. Gomez, Mr. Kalajian, Ms. Lambert, Mr. French, Ms. Lessard, Ms. Ide

BOARD ABSENT: Mr. Flores-Alvarez, Mr. Montalvo

ADMINISTRATION

PRESENT: Superintendent, Dr. Garcia, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Youngberg, Directors: Ms. Beghetto, Ms. Chatey, Mr. Pabon, Mr. Weathers

STUDENT

REPRESENTATIVES: None

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

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Dr. Sewall called the November 14, 2017 Board of Education meeting to order at 7:04pm in the Windham High School Library Media Center.

PLEDGE OF ALLIEGIANCE

Ms. Lambert led the Board and the Public in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES

October 11, 2017 Board of Education Meeting Minutes (Ref.1)

October 25, 2017 Board of Education Meeting Minutes (Ref. 1A)

**The October 11, 2017 and October 25, 2017 Board of Education meeting minutes were approved as submitted.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Israel Torres, parent and resident, spoke about issues regarding the Barrows lottery process. He is asking that his son be granted a seat in the school.

Mr. Bill Powers, resident, spoke regarding his pleasure that the Windham High School referendum was passed by the voters of the Town of Windham. He congratulated the Superintendent and the School Planning and Design Committee for bringing the proposal to the voters and having the vote be successful. He stated that the town is ready to move forward.

The Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools acknowledged the members of the Support Windham High School Political Action Committee for all their efforts to have the high school project referendum pass. The members were presented with a certificate of appreciation. Ms. Lambert noted that the group worked very hard and particularly the officers of the PAC.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

### Celebrations

#### The Great Debate

Approximately 200 Windham students from C.H. Barrows STEM Academy, Windham Middle School and Windham High School attended "The Great Debate" event in Bridgeport to watch the debate between Harvard University and Howard University. The topics of the debates were gun control and criminal justice.

#### Athletics

The High School boys' soccer team has progressed into post-season playoffs. The High School girls' volleyball team hosted Dig Pink, a fundraiser for Side Out Foundation. Alfonso Vazquez, a boys' soccer player was recognized as an ECC Athlete of the Week on October 1.

#### ECO Students to Present

Windham ECO students, under the leadership of ECO Director, Dr. Ana Marie Sanchez and Jemiel Rose of Electric Board and Dr. Garcia, Superintendent, will present for a second time at the CABE/CAPPS conference in Mystic.

#### Veterans Day

Dr. Garcia recognized all the schools that hosted events to honor veterans in our communities and provided the opportunity for students to meet and thank veterans.

### Advisory Boards

Dr. Garcia met with several advisory boards this month. These groups were the Parent Advisory Board, the Teacher Advisory Group, and Community Advisory Group. They each discussed topics of interest to them, giving the Superintendent valuable information as to what is important. One idea that was consistent throughout the groups is the development of a profile of what a Windham High School student should look like.

### i-Ready

Dr. Garcia explained that in the Spring of 2017, an assessment vetting committee looked at a variety of assessment platforms and selected i-Ready for use in grades kindergarten through 8. The platform hosts computer adaptive diagnostic assessments that align Common Core Standards in both reading and math. Dr. Tracy Youngberg, Assistant Superintendent, and Mr. Neil Weathers, Director of Assessment, gave the Board a presentation on the i-Ready platform.

### Pedro Noguera visit

The District was honored to host in partnership with Eastern Connecticut State University, Dr. Pedro Noguera, a critically acclaimed scholar and author in the area of equity in education. Staff and students had an opportunity to hear Dr. Noguera speak and also to meet in a more personal setting after he toured Windham High School. Dr. Garcia would like to thank Eastern Connecticut State University for their partnership and Karen Lapuk and Aradhana Mudambi for spearheading the initiative on behalf of Windham Public Schools. Ms. Ide asked if the session was videotaped and Dr. Garcia noted that her office would check with ECSU and provide the link if it is available.

### Parent & Community University

The fall Parent & Community University (PCU) was held on October 28. Again, this was a very successful event and included sessions on School Governance Councils and smartphone technology. This year, the PCU will be complimented by informative sessions to be held throughout the year in the community. Ms. Ide complimented the staff and said that she was pleased to see so many parents and students attend.

### State of the Schools

The second annual State of the Schools event will be held on November 21 at Charles H. Barrows STEM Academy. A second session will be held and open to the public at 5pm that evening. All are welcome to attend.

### Budget Calendar

The budget calendar was presented to the Board with the additional of two opportunities for members of School Governance Councils to give input.

### Influx of Students from Puerto Rico

As of the date of the Board meeting, 57 students from Puerto Rico have been enrolled after having been displaced by the recent hurricane. Windham Middle School has had the most new students. The continued arrival of students may cause transportation issues as schools begin to fill. Ms. Ide asked if the District was utilizing McKinney Vento assistance from the State and Dr. Garcia indicated that the District had taken advantage of the funding. The District has implemented some measures to ensure as smooth as possible transition for relocating students such as a centralized registration process. Dr. Garcia said that she may need to come back to the Board in the future regarding funding if the students continue to arrive beyond the number that can be absorbed into the population.

There was discussion regarding special education needs for the students. Mr. Pabon indicated that there were some needs but each case is being evaluated as the students arrive.

### Community Partnership with the Fire Department regarding Autism

The Pupil Services Department provided the Windham Fire Department with an in-service on responding to incidents with students on the autism spectrum. This is the first time such a partnership has been undertaken. Ms. Ide suggested that the same program could be offered to

the police. Dr. Garcia would like to thank Suzanne Krach, Miguel Pabon and Sarah Larson for their work.

### Alternative School

The District has partnered with PATH Academy to provide an alternative education for students. Dr. Garcia introduced members of the PATH Academy staff and board. Ms. Ray, Chief Executive Officer, spoke to the Board and expressed her pleasure in being able to partner with the District to provide education resources for their students and District students and that the goals of both organizations are aligned. This program is a state-mandated program and is aimed at keeping students in school. These students need to have access to consistent curriculum.

The original plan was to house the program at the District but, due to the move from the Kramer Building, that plan had to be abandoned. It was fortuitous that the Academy was looking to partner at this time and this robust program will provide a safe and good climate for student learning. Success is the key. There will also be training for parents. Assistant Superintendent Johnson and Director Pabon will be on this team.

Ms. Ide asked how many students would presently be involved. Dr. Garcia indicated there are approximately 15 but that number may increase. Dr. Sewall asked if students can stay at Path after their suspension period. Dr. Garcia indicated that that would be an option. Ms. Lambert stated that this program would replace individual tutoring.

### First Reading of Policies

The Policy Committee presented the following policy for first reading: *Policy #5154.4 Americans with Disabilities Act*. Dr. Garcia explained that these changes were made to keep the District in Compliance with State and Federal regulations. Dr. Sewall asked what the limitations of school buildings might be. Dr. Garcia noted that the Strategic Plan provides for ADA compliance. Ms. Lambert indicated that it was not clear what had been altered in the policy. Ms. Krach will clarify for the next meeting.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### POLICY COMMITTEE

Ms. Lessard advised that the committee has not met since the last meeting.

### FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Dr. Sewall advised that the committee met that the budget appears to be on target at approximately 25% of the fiscal year passed with 20% of the budgeted monies spent. It was noted that special education costs are a concern. The State has passed the budget and there are no unexpected cuts to state assistance.

**Motion by Mr. Kalajian, seconded by Ms. Lambert 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 has not met awaiting decision on the referendum and final plans for the move from the Kramer building. The committee will meet in December to begin discussion about the impact on the master plan.

Dr. Sewall asked for clarifications regarding next steps in the high school renovation project. Mr. Kalajian indicated that the DAS would be meeting soon with the District to review the Ed Specs. A building committee will be formed by the town. The committee will put together the team that will deal with the project moving forward. Dr. Sewall noted that the role of the Board would be to monitor that the renovation meets the Ed Specs.

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The committee met on November 1. The agenda was to begin to prepare a system to evaluate the superintendent. Dr. Garcia has been asked to put together a proposal after the first of the year. It is anticipated that the system will follow the CAFE outline. Ms. Ide asked how the Board would weigh in. Dr. Sewall said there would be discussion at the Executive Committee and all were invited to attend. Ms. Ide asked if the full board could get an advance copy of the document.

### ACTION ITEMS

**Motion by Mr. Kalajian, seconded by Ms. Lessard that the board approve the Board of Education meeting dates, including committee meetings (Ref. 2) presented for first reading on October 11, 2017.**

There was discussion regarding a change to the January and June dates and adding dates in the summer.

**Amended Motion by Mr. Kalajian, seconded by Ms. Lessard that the board approve the Board of Education meeting dates for 2018, including committee meetings with the following changed: the January meeting will be held on January 10; the June meeting will be held on June 20 and the dates of July 11 (regular meeting) and 15 (workshop) and August 8 (regular meeting) and 22 (workshop) be added to the calendar.**

**Motion is unanimously approved.**

**Motion by Mr. Kalajian, seconded by Dr. Gomez that the board approve the revisions to Policy #5144.1 Physical Restraint and Seclusion of Students (Ref. 3) presented for first reading on October 11, 2017.**

**Motion is unanimously approved.**

**Motion by Ms. Ide, seconded by Ms. Lambert that the board approve the revisions to Policy #1150 Community Relations – Responsibilities of School Personnel (Ref. 3a) presented for first reading on October 11, 2017.**

**Motion is unanimously approved.**

**Motion by Ms. Lambert, seconded by Dr. Gomez that the board approve the revisions to Policy #4218.6 Personnel – Certified/Non-Certified Cellular Telephones Policy (Ref. 3b) presented for first reading on October 11, 2017.**

Dr. Gomez asked how many District cell phones were allocated to staff. Dr. Garcia said the privilege is based on job description and she will get the number of phones to the Board.

**Motion is unanimously approved.**

Personnel Recommendations (Ref. 4)

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

APPOINTMENTS

- Miriam Bonano Nieves, General Cafeteria Worker at Natchaug School effective September 29, 2017, Salary \$11.65 Per hour. Replacement.
- Robinson Camacho, District Community Organizer/Attendance Specialist effective October 22, 2017, Salary \$53,000. Replacement.
- Hiram Galarza-Espinosa, Special Education Paraprofessional at Windham Middle School effective October 25, 2017, Salary \$ 12.40 per hour. New Position.
- Jillian McLeavy, Spanish Teacher at Windham High School effective September 28, 2017, Salary, BA/3 \$42,160. Replacement
- Shannon Middleton, General Cafeteria Worker at Sweeney School effective September 28, 2017, Salary, \$11.65 per hour. New Position.
- Stacy Ross, Special Education Paraprofessional at Charles H Barrows STEM Academy effective October 11, 2017, Salary \$12.40 per hour. New Position.

RESIGNATIONS

- Norah Zarzecki, Tutor at Windham High School effective November 10, 2017.
- Mary Bezares Negron, Guidance Counselor at Windham High School effective December 6, 2017.
- Wildaliz DeJesus, Paraprofessional at WECC Prospect Street effective October 13, 2017.

Ms. Lambert asked if the position of Director of Guidance would be posted. Dr. Garcia stated that the District does intend to fill that position at a later date.

**Motion is unanimously approved**

Budget Transfers

**Motion by Ms. Lambert, seconded by Mr. Kalajian that the Board of Education approve the budget transfers as recommended by the Finance and Audit Committee.**

**Motion is unanimously approved.**

Ms. Lambert asked if they students coming from Puerto Rico are receiving special services. Mr. Pabon said that there is a centralized registration process that matches families to resources. At the school, the student need for special services is determined and his department work with them to develop a profile.

Dr. Gomez asked how many more students the District can accommodate. Dr. Garcia said that she would consult the Board if we get close to overcrowding. Mr. Kalajian said that the School Planning and Design Committee will start to look at the possible issue. Mr. Pabon said that the District's self-contained programs are already at capacity. Dr. Garcia noted that transportation is an issue for many of these families whose students cannot fit in their neighborhood schools. Dr. Gomez expressed his concern that this could cause a state of emergency. Ms. Lambert said that ESOL is an issue and, since that staff is hard to recruit, we should begin now.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. George Hernandez, Board member of PATH Academy, thanked the Board for partnering with PATH to provide the alternative school.

The Board acknowledged the contributions for Mr. Montalvo during his term on the Board and wished him well in the future.

No Executive session is required.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**Motion by Mr. Kalajian, seconded by Ms. Lambert, that the board adjourn its meeting at 8:45 PM.**

**Motion is unanimously approved**

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Jaime Gomez, Secretary