

Board of Education Meeting
September 19, 2016

Call to Order

Board Chair Gee called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m. in the Suffield Middle School Auditorium. Present: Board members Natalie Semyanko, Jeanne Gee, Kendra Wiesel, Susi Keane, Matt Service, John Richter, George Beiter, Michael Sepko, Superintendent Karen Berasi, Assistant Superintendent Brian Hendrickson, and Business Manager Bill Hoff

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Recognition

None

Public Comment

None

Approval of Minutes

Service moved, Beiter seconded to approve the September 6, 2016 minutes. All voted in favor except Beiter and Sepko, who abstained. The motion carried 6-0-2.

Consent Agenda

None

Discussion Items

• Summer Curriculum Update

Mr. Hendrickson reviewed the professional development offered to staff and the curriculum work done over the summer at each of the schools. Many teachers and curriculum leaders were involved in the work. In response to several Board members' questions, Mr. Hendrickson said teachers worked on a voluntary basis and they were selected based on interest and availability, no professional development opportunities were denied to teachers over the summer, and the number of social studies teachers was higher than other subjects because there were a lot of redundancies in the social studies curriculum and social studies teachers were motivated to correct this. Mr. Hendrickson noted the professionalism and dedication of our teachers who were willing to volunteer their time over summer vacation to engage in this work. In response to a question relative to how the curriculum work is articulated to the faculty at each school, Mr. Hendrickson said at the elementary level there is a roll-out of the curriculum. At the secondary level, full departments were engaged in the work so it was already rolled out in the summer work sessions. In response to a question relative to Rubicon, Mr. Hendrickson said all curricula will be housed in the Rubicon platform and it is a minimum of a three year process.

• 2016 ESY/Summer Update

Ms. Donais and Ms. Kolodziej presented the ESY and summer programs to the Board. Ms. Donais highlighted the CCSN training that occurred prior to the program for the staff; a total of 46 staff members attended. Board Chair Gee recommended a definition of terms of special education terminology. Ms. Kolodziej discussed the pre and post assessments given to staff members, which showed a significant increase in understanding of the topics in the post assessments. In response to a question relative to ongoing staff assessments, Ms. Kolodziej said that is currently occurring in a

dialog/consult format. Mr. Hendrickson said in talking with paraprofessionals, they said the training was beneficial not only in knowledge but also in application. Ms. Donais reviewed the ESY program details including dates, number of students who attended and summer staffing. She also reviewed the Kids Korner camp, a social skills camp aligned to the student IEP goals and objectives and the Camp Sunrise and Tween Camp at Sunrise Park. In response to a question relative to parent feedback about Camp Sunrise, Ms. Kolodziej said she spoke with all three families and staff, and the feedback was extremely positive. Children were integrated well with their peers, and the students really enjoyed the camp. In response to a question relative to takeaways that will inform their work next year, Ms. Kolodziej said they will focus on aligning the district's ESY dates with Parks & Recreation's schedule. She would also like to do more training of school staff with Parks & Recreation's staff; it's a great partnership and they are very accommodating. In response to several Board members' questions, Ms. Donais said they did progress monitoring based on goals and objectives, planning for next year will begin in late February/early March, and alternatives to the programs offered varies and is dependent on the student. It's looked at individually with the focus on individualizing programming for the needs of each student by optimizing the programs offered in district in the least restrictive environment while maintaining progress. If a program in-district is not appropriate, an alternative will be chosen based on the student's specific needs. In response to Board members' questions, Ms. Kolodziej said the summer programs offered this past summer are beneficial to the student because they are in their own community with their peers, and the students who were offered the program but declined had other plans for the summer.

- August 2016 Financial Report

Mr. Hoff said the report is still preliminary but most hiring is now complete and there is a projected year-end net surplus of \$142,164. Health insurance is based on the budget as the district has not received an invoice with new staff.

Reports to the Board

Superintendent's Report

- Ms. Berasi said a letter notifying SHS parents that the Argentina trip is cancelled is going out tomorrow. Students can either get a full refund or switch to the England/France trip.
- The Superintendent said a Meet and Greet for Natalie Donais is on September 28 from 5:00-6:30 p.m. She is hoping many special education families attend to get to know Ms. Donais.
- Ms. Berasi said Sara Baranauskas has been asked to present at the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics conference in April in San Antonio; Steve Autieri has been nominated for the National Science Teachers Robert Yager Excellence in Teaching award; and Carl Casinghino has been selected as the winner of the National Council of Teachers of English Media Literacy award for 2016, which will be presented to him at their annual conference this fall in Atlanta. She congratulated them and said the district is very proud of them and the other excellent teachers in our district. Board member Richter would like to have these teachers recognized in different media in and out of Suffield.
- Ms. Berasi said on September 16, the CEO and the local program services specialist of the National FFA visited Suffield High School's Agriscience department. She and Mr. Moccio have been invited to the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis.

Chair's Report

- Board Chair Gee said Mrs. Cannon, who donated the property behind Spaulding School to the district, passed away. Flowers were sent on behalf of the Board of Education.

- Ms. Gee attended the Wingman pep rally at Suffield Middle School last week, and said it was fantastic.
- She will be attending a CAFE workshop tomorrow morning on running effective board meetings and she will be talking with someone about providing the board with specific guidelines/rubric to conduct a board self-evaluation.
- Ms. Gee reminded members of the September 26 panel discussion in Windsor Locks
- Ms. Gee will attend a CREC meeting on Wednesday, September 21.

Business Manager's Report

- Mr. Hoff said transportation is improving, including meeting goals on getting students home on time.
- Mr. Hoff and Ms. Strzegowski attended the open houses at McAlister and Spaulding last week to promote the food service program. Letters were sent home last week relative to beginning the finger scanning program in the elementary schools, and only one family has opted their children out. Mr. Hoff said they received positive feedback from parents attending open house.
- Mr. Hoff said the district has received approval from the State on the food service program's administrative review.

Subcommittee Reports

Board member Semyanko said the Teaching and Learning subcommittee met on September 8 and discussed summer work Mr. Hendrickson presented tonight. The subcommittee was impressed with how much work was accomplished and she noted the Board is very supportive of PLC time for teachers. PDEC is going to look at the issue of PLC time. The committee also discussed enrollment of electives at the high school. The committee heard a proposal for changing report cards at Spaulding and McAlister schools. Currently the report cards are not aligned with what is being done in the classroom. The change will be rolled out to parents and Ms. Carpenter-Snow discussed it at open houses. Lastly, the committee discussed the most effective times to have meetings and will continue meeting in the morning to accommodate the schedules of staff who attend these meetings. Meetings will be at 7:30 a.m. on Thursdays. A curriculum cabinet workshop is scheduled for October 4 at 8:00 a.m.

Board member Service said the Policy subcommittee met this evening and reviewed policies that are impacted by recent legislative changes. These revised policies will come to the Board at the October 3 meeting. The committee is also exploring a different format for organizing policies and regulations. It will take some time to change the format but will be more concise and allow for better utilization.

Board member Service noted there is a HR/Personnel subcommittee meeting on Wednesday, September 21.

Future Business

Board member Sepko said he would like to revisit observing Veteran's Day as a day off for students. He received a phone call from a community member who expressed concern over Veteran's Day not being observed. Board member Gee noted, as the Board had discussions when setting this year's calendar, Veteran's Day is celebrated and observed even though school is in session, and suggested Board member Sepko invite the community member to visit one of the schools on Veteran's Day to see the activities that occur honoring our veterans.

Board member Wiesel asked for an update on CCSN's work in the district. Superintendent Berasi said an update will be given in November.

Board member Beiter asked to schedule a budget subcommittee meeting. The budget subcommittee will meet on Friday September 30 at 7:00 a.m.

Adjournment

Beiter moved, Richter seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

Minutes are subject to approval at the next meeting on October 3, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Guerrette
Secretary Pro Tem