

Board of Education Regular Meeting
January 2, 2018

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. in the Suffield Middle School Auditorium.

Present: Board members Kendra Wiesel, George Beiter, Matt Service, John Richter, Susan Mercik Davis, Michael Sepko, Maureen Sattan, Debra Dudack, Lori D'Ostuni (6:03 p.m.), 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

Beiter moved to approve the December 18, 2017 meeting minutes. Dudack seconded the motion. All members voted in favor except Beiter, who abstained. The motion carried 8-0-1.

Consent Agenda

None

Discussion/Action Items

● Curriculum & Instruction Update and SHS Course Proposals

Mr. Hendrickson referred to the memo on key updates in curriculum and instruction the Board received and was happy to answer any questions. He also showed video clips demonstrating the day-to-day work of the curriculum leaders and instructional coaches to inform the Board of their roles and responsibilities. In response to board members' questions, Mr. Hendrickson said the next steps in curriculum and instruction are to continue articulating curriculum in all core academic areas, which is on track to be completed by July 2019 and to continue listening to the needs of teachers and provide the necessary support. Mr. Hendrickson said there are six curriculum leaders and noted Ms. Grasso is now the ELA/SS K-5 curriculum leader. There are two elementary instructional coaches: a math instructional coach and an ELA/Literacy instructional coach. The ELA/literacy instructional coach position is currently vacant due to Ms. Grasso moving to the curriculum leader position. The instructional coaches work with all K-5 teachers, a total of 48. He noted the number of coaching cycles has increased significantly. The measurements used to evaluate the coaches' effectiveness is through several means: teachers' instructional practices observed by administrators, dialog between teachers and administrators, conversations with curriculum leaders, conversations among teachers and the key measures in the District and School Improvement Plans. There is also tracking and monitoring of student performance of the teachers who utilize the instructional coaches. Ms. Berasi noted the difficult work the curriculum leaders, coaches, teachers and administrators are all doing and thanked the board for their support.

Three Suffield High School course proposals were presented to the Board:
American Sign Language (ASL) III & IV: Ms. Volpintesta, SHS student Mickey Barron, and Mr. Moccio explained the courses, which are both semester long courses. As Mickey was sharing his personal experience in taking ASL I this year, Ms. Volpintesta signed what he was saying, and conversely, as Ms. Volpintesta explained the desire for the additional ASL courses, Mickey signed what she was saying. Currently there are two sections of ASL I this semester with a total of 38 students; ASL II will be offered next semester. Mr. Moccio said the course is very popular with over 60 students wanting to take ASL I this past semester. ASL is used in America and Canada and it satisfies the world language requirement for colleges. The courses are equivalent to college level semester courses.

MOTION #18-19: Beiter moved to approve American Sign Language III & IV. D'Ostuni seconded the motion and all members voted in favor. The motion carried 9-0.

Honors Statistics: Mr. Janick said the high school currently offers Academic Statistics and AP Statistics, all having about 25 students each. Offering Honors Statistics would provide students with more choices and help fill an identified gap between Academic Statistics and AP Statistics. Mr. Janick said there is high demand for statistics courses as the current classes are large and the high school has historically offered at least two AP Statistics sections each year. Mr. Moccio said there would not be an increase in staffing as there would just be a shift in which math classes students would be taking.

MOTION #18-20: D'Ostuni moved to approve Honors Statistics. Beiter seconded the motion and all members voted in favor. The motion carried 9-0.

ECE Environmental Science: Justin Kaput said that many students want to take a more rigorous environmental science course. This course will be the equivalent of a college introductory course and students will earn three college credits. Mr. Kaput said there is an AP Environmental Science course but the ECE course offers more flexibility to students. Mr. Moccio said there are five ECE courses offered at SHS, including this course, and there has been specific demand from students for this course.

MOTION #18-21: Beiter moved to approve ECE Environmental Science. Richter seconded the motion and all members voted in favor. The motion carried 9-0.

- 2018-2019 Proposed Technology Budget Presentation

Ms. Osleger reviewed the budget highlights in next year's proposed technology budget which include the procurement of a centralized asset management system, the final phase of replacing classroom projectors, reduction of infrastructure hardware, curriculum enhancements, and enhanced collaboration space in McAlister's cafeteria. She reviewed the major line item changes to the budget as compared to this year's budget. Ms. Osleger noted this is a maintenance budget as there are no new requests, with the exception of K-12 curriculum resources.

- 2018-2019 Proposed Facilities Budget Presentation

Mr. Plano reviewed the facilities objectives which include providing timely and quality service to stakeholders, improving school security, enhancing school programs, preserving district assets, utilizing efficiencies, improving the quality of school grounds maintenance, and managing energy consumption. Notable budget drivers are continued school safety improvements, annual review of maintenance contracts, reduction of custodial supplies by 15% due to changing vendors, reduction in furniture cost through acquiring items no longer need by state agencies, and continued use of high school student labor during the summer. Mr. Plano explained the changes to the staffing structure to better meet the needs of the district. Mr. Plano reviewed the major line item changes to the budget as compared to this year's budget. He stated this is a maintenance budget as no new initiatives are being added.

- 2018-2019 Proposed Transportation Budget Presentation

Mr. Hoff reviewed the proposed transportation budget for next year. Transportation includes busing services for all students in the district including vocational students and in-district and out-of-district special education students. The only exception is Agriscience students from neighboring towns in which those students are transported by their sending districts. Mr. Hoff reviewed the major line item changes in the regular education and special education transportation budgets. He noted the district and M&J have agreed to a three year contract extension, providing salary increases of 2% the first year, 2.25% for the following two years which is comparable with other districts. Mr. Hoff said the gas and diesel increases are a projection, and we will have a better idea of fuel costs in February when the Town goes out for bid. He reviewed the opportunities to continue improvement: continue creating more neighborhood stops, continue sharing Vo-tech transportation services, and explore more opportunities to share special education services. In response to a board member's question, Mr. Hoff said the district is not required to offer afterschool buses. Ms. Berasi noted that some districts have eliminated the late buses due to budget constraints but she would prefer not to as it would prevent some students from participating in after school activities.

- Approval of the Number of SHS Foreign Exchange Students for the 2018-2019 School Year
Ms. Berasi said per board policy, the board needs to approve the number of foreign exchange students accepted annually. Typically the number of students has been two and that is what the Superintendent is recommending. Suffield High has one foreign exchange student this year and there were none last year. If there is a request for more than two, the board can increase the number of foreign exchange students.

MOTION #18-22: Service moved to approve two foreign exchange students for the 2018-2019 school year. Beiter seconded the motion and all members voted in favor. The motion carried 9-0.

Reports to the Board

- Superintendent's Report
 - Superintendent Berasi said a board orientation meeting was held after the December 18 Board meeting and there is a BOE workshop on January 20 with Nick Caruso from CABE.
 - Superintendent Berasi reported the high school had a large leak in the guidance department ceiling this morning due to three coils bursting. The coils, ceiling and carpet need to be replaced at an approximate cost of \$25,000. Mr. Hoff has contacted our insurance company. She thanked the guidance department for their flexibility in moving their offices to the media center.
- Board Chair report
 - Board Chair Wiesel said she is working with Nick Caruso to develop an agenda for the January 20 workshop. Some items on the agenda will be the Board's self-evaluation and the Superintendent's evaluation process. She asked board members to send additional topics they may want to discuss.
 - Board Chair Wiesel said she has established subcommittee lists based on board members' preferences. She noted the board will be discussing the possibility of reducing the number of subcommittees in the near future. The only subcommittee not currently established is the negotiations subcommittee as there is not an immediate need for that committee to meet and it may fall under another committee if restructuring occurs.
Budget/Finance/Facilities subcommittee: Chair, Michael Sepko, members Maureen Sattan, John Richter, Lori D'Ostuni, and George Beiter. Policy subcommittee: Chair,

Debra Dudack, members Kendra Wiesel, Sue Mercik Davis, Maureen Sattan, and Matt Service. Teaching & Learning subcommittee: Chair, Sue Mercik Davis, members Kendra Wiesel and Maureen Sattan. Liaison positions have not yet been filled. A Policy subcommittee meeting is scheduled for January 8 at 5:00 p.m. to discuss the process of reviewing and revising the board bylaws. A budget subcommittee meeting will also need to be scheduled this month.

- Business Managers Report
 - Mr. Hoff said he appreciated M&J's proactive work to get the buses running this morning.
 - Mr. Hoff said he does not have an update on the insurance claim from lightening damage done to school buildings. The insurance company is supposed to be sending a document stating the final claim, which is anticipated to cover all of the expenses except for \$10,000.

Future Business

None

Adjournment

Beiter moved, Dudack seconded to adjourn the meeting at 7:56 p.m.

Minutes are subject to approval at the special meeting of January 8, 2018.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra Dudack
Secretary