

***THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO BOARD APPROVAL AT THE
April 4, 2013 MEETING
Joint Board of Education Committee***

February 28, 2013

A regular meeting of the Joint Board of Education Committee was held on Thursday, February, 28, 2013 in the John Winthrop Middle School Library, with the following Board Members present:

CHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION: Lianne Rutty, Laurie Rubinow, Amy Safran, Peg Reyer, Ashley Marsh, Wendy King, Nicole Sypher (arrived at 7:09), David Fitzgibbons, Shaun Savoie

DEEP RIVER BOARD OF EDUCATION: Christine Daniels, Mark Malcarne (arrived at 7:40 p.m.), Jim Olson, Kc Nelson-Oliveria, Arthur Robbins, Liz Tracy (arrived at 7:10 p.m.), Miriam Morrissey (arrived at 7:01 p.m.)

ESSEX BOARD OF EDUCATION: Lon Seidman, Adam Conrad, Loretta McCluskey, Judie McCann, Jeff Burzin

REGION 4 BOARD OF EDUCATION: Linda Hall, Mary Beth Harrigan, Chris Riley, Mario Gioco (arrived at 7:04 p.m.) , Ann Monaghan, Elaine Fitzgibbons, Duane Gates (arrived at 7:01 p.m.)

Also in attendance: Dr. Ruth Levy, Superintendent; Dr. Joanne Beekley, Assistant Superintendent; Tracy Johnston, Director of Pupil Services, Garth Sawyer, Business Manager & Jennifer Bryan, Board Clerk.

Audience of Citizens: 5 present

CALL TO ORDER

Supervision District Committee Chair Wendy King called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The Chairs of the Chester, Essex Boards and Region 4 Board of Education called their respective Boards to order at 7:00 p.m. Deep River did not have a quorum, but reached a quorum at 7:01 p.m.

CONSENT AGENDA

On motion duly made and seconded, the Chester, Deep River, Essex and Region 4 Boards of Education unanimously VOTED to approve the consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the December 06, 2012 regular meeting of the Joint Board with the correction of Wendy King opening the meeting as opposed to Linda Hall.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Chester resident Julie Anne Divis voiced concern over communication with the public and feels that the posting of more detailed minutes needs to be quicker, as many parents are interested in Board activities, but are often too busy to attend the meetings. She also expressed her desire for Board enclosures to be posted on-line.

OTHER ITEMS –

Dr. Levy gave a brief overview of recent discussions held at Supervision District Budget Workshops and discussed the most pressing questions or concerns raised by citizens and BOE members. She announced that in response to those concerns, the administration has come up with a unique approach to have all 3 instrumental music teachers go to one elementary school on the same day, and teach one grade level for 4th, 5th, and 6th grade. This will reduce interruptions to the instruction in other subject areas. Additionally, performance rehearsals will now be held before school. She noted that the proposed reductions of .5 in Art, FLES, and Music are only in response to declining enrollment and do not represent a cut in student instruction in those subjects.

Dr. Levy also shared handouts regarding the proposed Supervisor of Special Education Services position. The handouts contained a draft job description and research on surrounding districts' administrative staffing for special education. She noted that there are a variety of titles given to comparable positions in surrounding towns.

Wendy King noted that it was now up to each Board to vote on the 2013-14 Supervision District budget as proposed. She started a review period to give the Boards time to look at the handouts prior to the vote. After approximately 5 minutes, Mrs. King asked if there were any questions for discussion. There were a few questions and clarifications re: the handout information.

David Fitzgibbons thanked members of the Supervision District Committee for their careful consideration of the educational experience of all of the districts' students.

There was a discussion regarding the proposed Supervision District 2013-14 budget. The Supervision District Committee voted earlier in the evening to bring the proposed budget in the amount of \$6,390,898 (Six million, three hundred ninety thousand, eight hundred ninety eight dollars) before the Joint Boards for vote.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Chester, Deep River, Essex and Region 4 Boards of Education unanimously VOTED to approve the 2013-14 Supervision District budget in the amount of \$6,390,898 (Six million, three hundred ninety thousand, eight hundred ninety dollars).

REPORTS

Financial Status Update

Mr. Sawyer gave a brief, high level financial update for each district. More detail will be given at the individual board meetings in March.

Dr. Levy reported on her recent coordinated efforts with First Selectmen to get all three towns designated as a HEARTSafe Community through an application process with the State. She said that should be a source of pride for the tri-town community.

Dr. Levy reported that tomorrow morning she will be speaking to the local Chamber of Commerce group in order to give her annual update to them and share highlights from our schools and various community efforts.

Dr. Levy updated the Boards on the current state of the upcoming April school vacation. Due to blizzard and hurricane this year, school has had to be cancelled 8 times; therefore school will be held on 18th and 19th of April as per the Board approved school calendar. Any further full days off of school will remove more days out of April break as per the procedure.

Dr. Levy also shared a handout showing the latest comparisons for other local school budgets around the state. She noted that our school budgets are coming in very nicely, particularly when looked at in comparison to surrounding towns.

Dr. Levy asked the Boards to review their informational enclosure concerning the CAPSS (CT Assoc. of Public School Superintendents) Position regarding public policy and school safety.

Dr. Levy discussed recent work by the District Security Oversight Committee (DSOC). She reported that prior to the February break, the Committee had teams of pertinent people do a security assessment of every school. March 5th will be the second meeting of DSOC. She noted that no proposed budgets contain any additional funds for security at this time, beyond what was already there prior to the assessments, so that the Committee can make sure to prioritize needs properly before impacting budgets.

In other security news, during winter recess, Troop F held their roll calls at JWMS and VRHS for the 7 am and 3 pm shifts in order to familiarize themselves with our school buildings. They will be doing the same at elementary schools in the near future.

Committee Reports

After a couple of re-sets due to weather cancellations, the Policy Committee will next meet on March 18th.

Joint BOE Finance Committee – Mr. Sawyer reported that they had to cancel their planned January 28th meeting. They are scheduled to meet again on March 11th to review health insurance proposals.

Joint BOE Curriculum Committee - Chair Mary-Beth Harrigan reported that the Committee met on January 23rd. Unfortunately only three members were able to attend, however, Dr. Beekley updated them on the new Naviance program which helps students create success plan as mandated. Teachers are currently receiving training on this software. The Committee was also updated on teacher curriculum committee work that continues to be done to align the Common Core State Standards with the district curriculum plans. Also discussed was the evaluation committee plan work and the new SEED plan for teacher evaluations.

Ad Hoc committees – 6th Grade and Pre-school Study Committees – Will be presenting their findings to the Joint Board on April 04th.

Assistant Superintendent's Report

Dr. Beekley presented the Board with a handout and an overview of what professional development is, and how it benefits teachers, students, & districts as requested by the Boards at the last meeting. Per State law, districts must provide a minimum of 18 hours within strict guidelines that are certificate dependant. She also provided answers to frequently asked questions regarding Professional Development. The focus of Professional Development is to provide teachers with what they need to help students achieve their highest academic expectations. She noted that a variety of methods are used, but the most important thing is that it be intensive, ongoing, and connect to teacher practice. In addition to training that provides the mandated Continuing Education credits, the district is also required to provide yearly training covering such diverse things as the use of epi pens, bullying prevention, DCF reporting requirements, etc...

Jim Olson asked that this information (the FAQ) be placed on the website for the public to access.

Dr. Beekley also provided the Boards with a general update on Professional Development and Curriculum work throughout the districts. She noted that the committees are making very nice progress with language arts curriculum committee work. She also reported that the administration continues to search for a part time K-5 math coach.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Julie Anne Divis asked what the current status was of recent talk about moving the 6th grade classes to JWMS. Dr. Levy noted that the 6th Grade Study Committee has been meeting on a monthly basis and will be presenting their recommendations to the Joint Boards on April 4th.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Next regular Joint BOE meeting is April 04, 2013.

ADJOURNMENT:

On Motion duly made and seconded, the Chester, Deep River and Essex Boards of Education unanimously VOTED to adjourn 7:53 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Bryan, Clerk