

**THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO BOARD APPROVAL AT THE  
June 04, 2015 MEETING  
Joint Board of Education Committee**

**April 16, 2015**

A regular meeting of the Joint Board of Education Committee was held on Thursday, April 16, 2015 in the John Winthrop Middle School Library, with the following Board Members present:

CHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION:	David Fitzgibbons, Arthur Henick, Robert Bibbiani, Charlene Fearon,
DEEP RIVER BOARD OF EDUCATION:	Jim Olson, Miriam Morrissey, Peter Corcoran
ESSEX BOARD OF EDUCATION:	Lon Seidman, DG Fitton, Loretta McCluskey, Carolyn Rotella
REGION 4 BOARD OF EDUCATION:	Chris Riley, Jennifer Clark, Mario Gioco, Elaine Fitzgibbons, Jane Cavanaugh, Leigh Rankin, Jim Olson, Ann Monaghan arrived at 7:09 p.m.

Also in attendance: Dr. Ruth Levy, Superintendent; Joanne Beekley, Assistant Superintendent & Jennifer Bryan, Board Clerk.

Audience of Citizens: Thomas Peterlik, Director of Food Services

**CALL TO ORDER**

Supervision District Committee Chair Lon Seidman called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

The Chairs of the Essex Board and the Region 4 Board of Education called their respective Boards to order at 7:02 p.m. The Chester and Deep River Boards lacked a quorum.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

On motion duly made and seconded, the Essex and Region 4 Boards of Education unanimously VOTED to approve the consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the February 26, 2015 regular meeting of the Joint Board, and the minutes of the Special meeting of March 30, 2015.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** – no comments were made

**OTHER ITEMS** –

There was a discussion regarding the Superintendent's recommendation to renew the cafeterias' Healthy Food Certification. Director of Food Services Thomas Peterlik reviewed the guidelines for the certification which the schools have participated in the last four years. This would simply be a renewal of that certification in which the Boards have approved the guidelines with the

allowed fundraiser exemption. Compliance with the program provides for money back from the State on every meal sold at the schools. Dr. Levy explained that the Governor's current budget proposal does not include funds for the Healthy Foods Certification incentive next year, so while the Boards need to move forward with their vote in order to meet deadlines for next year, it is possible that if the incentive will not be funded for 2015-16.

Mr. Bibbiani asked for clarification of what was covered by the certification and voiced his displeasure with some of the items offered as ala carte sales in the cafeteria. Mr. Peterlik clarified that only the prepackaged items for sale, separate of the reimbursable meals sold as part of the National School Lunch Program are required to meet the guidelines in order to receive the ten cent rebate, so in other words, all of the ala carte items must meet the healthy food guidelines. There is an exemption on foods sold outside of the school day, such as fundraisers, or at afterschool events.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Essex Board unanimously VOTED to approve the Superintendent's recommendation to renew certification that all food items sold to students during school hours other than those covered by exemption, will meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards to qualify for CSDE's Healthy Food Certification and monetary compensation from the State.

The Region 4 Board VOTED ( 7 yes, 1 no – C. Riley = Motion Passed) to approve the Superintendent's recommendation to renew certification that all food items sold to students during school hours other than those covered by exemption, will meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards to qualify for CSDE's Healthy Food Certification and monetary compensation from the State.

The Chester and Deep River Boards lacked a quorum, they will discuss and vote on this matter at their individual Board meetings in May.

Director of Food Services Thomas Peterlik presented a donation of \$4000 from Jonathan Rapp raised through his Dinners at the Farm events to be used by the Food Services Programs at Chester, Deep River, Essex, and Region 4 Schools. Mr. Riley thanked him and Mr. Rapp for their work.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Essex, and Region 4 Boards unanimously VOTED to accept the donation of \$4000 from Dinners at the Farm as presented.

## **REPORTS**

### Financial Status Update

In Mr. Sawyer's absence Dr. Levy gave a brief, high level financial update for each district. More detail will be given at the individual board meetings in May. Mr. Riley thanked the Administration for their great work in tackling the Region 4 deficit and bringing it down to less

than a tenth of what it was at the beginning of the year. He said they now have a way through it that will not affect tax payers.

### Superintendent's Report

Dr. Levy spoke briefly mentioning that it is a very busy time of year with budget presentations to each of the towns and the beginning of town budget meetings. Students are into SBAC testing, which Dr. Beekley will talk about in her update. She noted that the districts have been running beautifully, the students have been excelling, and the recent science fairs held at all of the elementary schools have been great.

### Committee Reports

The Joint BOE Policy Committee held a First Reading and VOTE on the following policies:

- #4112.8/4212.8 Nepotism
- #6173 Homebound Instruction
- #4132 Publication or Creation of Materials

The Joint BOE Policy Committee recommended the removal of the following policies from the policy manual:

- Policy #4112.4/4212.4 Health Examination

Jennifer Clark, Chair of the Committee presented all of the policies and gave a summary of changes or major points for each policy under consideration.

She was asked to elaborate on the Policy Committee's revisiting of the Health Examination Policy, as well as the possibility of keeping the policy and adding language that would make drug testing a requirement contingent on hiring. Ms. Clark started by saying that the Health Examination Policy was not useful, and its original intention, keeping the schools free of Tuberculosis, is now an outdated consideration. She went on to explain that with regards to the possibility of mandatory pre-employment drug testing, the Policy Committee spent a long time considering legal counsel's advice, current workplace laws, information from the Office of Legislative Research, and Committee members own research on the topic. It was determined to be unnecessary due to the fact that all contracts allow for the Superintendent to request drug testing of any employee if there are any indications or suspicions of the need for it. Additionally, adding that requirement in exposes the district to ADA (discrimination) issues, as well as cost and administrative issues. Dr. Levy also discussed the federal standards that dictate mandatory testing, and she discussed the ADA ramifications as well.

A discussion was held. Some members voiced concern over the possibility of hiring a teacher with a pre-existing condition that would become costly at a later time; some members voiced their support for the removal of the health exam policy, but would like to see the addition of a policy requiring mandatory drug testing; while others stated they did not see the need for the health exam policy, or the usefulness of mandatory drug testing. It was determined that there were two separate issues to consider. One being the Vote on the Policy Committee's recommendation to remove the outdated Health Examination Policy from the manual; the other being the consideration of a requirement for mandatory pre-employment drug testing. Chair Seidman asked that the Joint Board Vote on the issue at hand, which was removal of the policy, and then if Boards decide they want to, they can request that the Policy Committee look again at creating a new policy around mandatory drug testing.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Essex Board unanimously VOTED to approve the recommendation of the Joint Board Policy Committee to remove policy #4112.4/4212.4 from the policy manual.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Region 4 Board VOTED (4 Yes, 3 No – M. Gioco, A. Monaghan, J. Cavanaugh; 1 abstention – L. Rankin – Motion Passed) to approve the recommendation of the Joint Board Policy Committee to remove policy #4112.4/4212.4 from the policy manual.

The Chester and Deep River Boards lacked a quorum, they will discuss and vote on this matter at their individual Board meetings in May.

Joint BOE Finance Committee – David Fitzgibbons reported that the Committee met on March 31<sup>st</sup> and is looking at a possible “premium holiday” due to an excess in the insurance fund.

The Joint BOE Curriculum Committee - David Fitzgibbons reported that the Committee met on March 24<sup>th</sup> . They voted on an AP course proposal presented by Kim White of the VRHS Math Dept. They also discussed the Educator Evaluation Plan, Professional Development for 2015-16, and heard an update on CMT/CAPT/SBAC testing. Mr. Fitzgibbons said he was disappointed again at the low attendance by Committee members. He encouraged all representatives to attend the meetings, as it would add value to their experience as a board member as well as help them to be resource on curriculum issues for their other Board members.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the recent Joint Elementary PTO meeting at which the draft plan for adding grades PK-6 to Region 4 was presented to the public for the first time. The meeting had a turn out of approximately 100 people. There will be another public forum held at 7:00 p.m. on April 21<sup>st</sup> in the Valley Regional High School Auditorium. Additional opportunities for public feedback will be scheduled. There was a consensus that public outreach to share the facts and details of the plan is very important.

#### Assistant Superintendent’s Report

Dr. Beekley reported that the teacher evaluation plan has been submitted to the State. She is awaiting feedback so the plan can be brought back to boards at June 4th meeting for a vote of acceptance.

Dr. Beekley gave an update on Professional Development and Curriculum. She reported that the administration continues to work on building coherence for future professional development opportunities.

She also reported that the Elementary schools are currently involved in SBAC testing right now. The technology department has done a lot of hard wiring of systems to help avoid connectivity problems. Testing has been going well. JWMS will begin testing next week and VRHS will start theirs in a couple of weeks.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION** The Boards moved into Executive Session for the Superintendent’s Self evaluation at 8:28 p.m.

The Boards moved out of Executive Session at 9:01 p.m.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** No comments were made

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- 8.1 Next Regular Joint BOE Meeting, June 4, 2015 @ 7:00 p.m.
- 8.2 Second Reading and VOTE on pending policies (June)
- 8.3 Superintendent Contract Negotiation (June)
- 8.4 Discussion and Vote to accept Evaluation Plan (June)

**ADJOURNMENT:**

On Motion duly made and seconded, the Chester, Deep River, Essex and Region 4 Boards of Education unanimously VOTED to adjourn at 9:02 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Jennifer Bryan, Clerk