

***THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO BOARD APPROVAL AT THE  
October 2, 2014 MEETING  
Joint Board of Education Committee***

**August 21, 2014**

A regular meeting of the Joint Board of Education Committee was held on Thursday, August 21, 2014 in the John Winthrop Middle School Library, with the following Board Members present:

CHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION:	Wendy-King, Arthur Henick, David Fitzgibbons, Rodney Alston, Vacancy, Vacancy, Vacancy, Vacancy
DEEP RIVER BOARD OF EDUCATION:	Christine Daniels, Jim Olson, Dave Berardis, Hadley Kornacki, Vacancy
ESSEX BOARD OF EDUCATION:	Lon Seidman, DG Fitton, Loretta McCluske, Carolyn Rotella
REGION 4 BOARD OF EDUCATION:	Chris Riley, Lauri Wichtowski, Jennifer Clark, Mario Gioco, Ann Monaghan, Elaine Fitzgibbons, Jane Cavanaugh, Leigh Rankin, Jim Olson

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

Audience of Citizens:

**CALL TO ORDER**

Supervision District Committee Chair Christine Daniels called the meeting to order at 7:14 p.m.

The Chairs of the Essex Boards and Region 4 Board of Education called their respective Boards to order at 7:14 p.m.

The Chester and Deep River Boards did not have a quorum present.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Region 4 Board member Leigh Rankin asked that comments attributed to her on page 2 of the June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014 Joint BOE minutes, be removed as she felt they were not written in the correct context and did not accurately represent her intention behind the remarks. Region 4 Board member Ann Monaghan also asked that a comment attributed to her, a few lines above the last sentence be stricken as well, although she asked that a comment indicating the hearing officer is paid by the district remain a part of the minutes.

A discussion was held regarding the level of detail desired in Board minutes. Some members felt there was too much detail currently included and expressed a desire to have minutes be less detailed. Other members stated that they felt the level of detail was desirable in order to show transparency, and provide historical context for decisions. It was decided that a discussion regarding the desirable level of detail for Board minutes be added as a future agenda item.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Essex Board of Education unanimously VOTED to approve the consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the June 05, 2014 regular meeting of the Joint Board revised as discussed.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Region 4 Board VOTED (7 yes, 2 abstain – Jennifer Clark and Mario Gioco) to approve the consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the June 05, 2014 regular meeting of the Joint Board revised as discussed.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** – no comments were made

### **OTHER ITEMS –**

The update on the Summer Transition Program was moved up to this point in the agenda. Kristina Len and Mary Hambor discussed their work this past summer with 6 students from the Region 4 Transition Academy. They reported that a Workforce Alliance grant for \$12,000 allowed students to gain summer work experience and get paid for it. In addition, students were educated in job skills such as “how to dress for work” and “social skills on the job”. Students were employed in a variety of locations including libraries, farms, town hall, and retail stores.

Miranda, an upcoming senior at Valley, who worked for the Housing Authority talked with the Board about her work at Kirtland Commons in Deep River this past summer. She talked about how much she enjoyed helping the residents to be more involved in recreational and social activities. She noted that as part of her Capstone project she will be continuing her work at Kirtland Commons.

The update on Celebrate Learning was also moved up to this point in the agenda. Supervisor of Pupil Services, Tyson Stoddard and Celebrate Learning Principal, Peter Foxon talked to the Board about the 5 week summer program open to all students, PK-rising 8<sup>th</sup> graders, which had approximately 180 students participating in a variety of classed embedded with core curriculum skills, academic, social, and emotional components. They noted that once again an extended day program was offered to those who would benefit from a little more assistance, or the development of additional strategies to assist them in school year social interactions. They shared a slide show with the Board members to demonstrate the types of activities that were offered. They also noted that over 90% of survey responses were positive with regards to program scheduling and course offerings. There was a brief question and answer period following their presentation.

### **REPORTS**

#### Financial Status Update

Mr. Sawyer gave a brief, high level financial update for each district, noting that at this point in the year, he is just closing out the previous year’s budget and so there is not much to report. Therefore more detail will be given at the individual board meetings in September.

#### Superintendent’s Report

Dr. Levy reported that it had been a very busy summer for hiring.

Dr. Levy presented her 2014-15 Initiatives, including the following: implementing the new educator evaluation plans for both administrators and teachers; rolling out NWEA to provide teachers with real time student data; the addition of a Technology Integration Coordinator to assist teachers in incorporating technology into their lesson plans; guiding the Declining Enrollment Task Force through monthly meetings in order to bring recommendations back to the boards at the end of the year; Developing new survey instruments for more stakeholder feedback; Continuing to address safety and security; Providing support to the large number of new staff and administrative members; Gathering community feedback at the Community Dinner in January; Examining block scheduling, and possible alternatives at Valley; Conducting Senior exit interviews with Valley students, as well as 8<sup>th</sup> grade students; Developing a

Shelter Manual for John Winthrop Middle School, and exploring Grant opportunities to help defray the costs of security needs and a possible turf field.

Dr. Levy and Dr. Beekley updated the Boards on the Educator Evaluation Plans for both administrators and teachers.

Dr. Beekley talked briefly about a few changes made on teacher evaluation plan since the Boards last looked at it. Dr. Beekley noted that the revised plan has been submitted to the state and she passed out a sheet summarizing those changes. She discussed differences between the minimum evaluation / observation cycles for tenured vs. non-tenured teachers, noting that the plan always provides the option to do more evaluations if needed. There was some discussion regarding details, and the logistics of carrying out this plan. Dr. Beekley explained that she is working with the Principals to find ways to build in efficiencies to help ease the pull on their time.

Dr. Levy discussed the new Administrator Evaluation Plan. Last year the districts adopted the SEED plan. This year she spent time on a committee with Superintendents from 7 other districts. They worked with representatives from CAS, CAPSS, the State Dept. of Education, and University of Washington Professors over an intensive 4 month period. They spent the time researching plans and putting together a best fit plan that still meets the SEED plan requirements, but also includes an institutional inquiry cycle to help align administrator goals with educator goals, as well as student outcomes, and allows for a more global outlook. Additionally, this plan is more robust for support of newer administrators, as well as the support of other Central Office administrators, including Pupil Services administrators and other 092 positions.

Dr. Levy reviewed the main highlights in detail, noting the plan allows for the connection between student, to teacher, to administrator, to district goals. Dr. Levy said the plan was being brought before the Boards for approval this evening. Some questions were discussed regarding survey instruments, evaluation cycle timing, follow-up throughout the year to determine any adjustments that may or may not be necessary at the end of the year, relation to common core curriculum measures, NWEA testing, and SBAC testing.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Essex and Region 4 Boards of Education unanimously VOTED to approve the teacher and administrator evaluation plans as presented.

Due to a lack of a quorum, the Chester and Deep River Boards will need to vote on the plans at their meetings in September.

Region 4 Board Chair Chris Riley stated his desire that information explaining specific Professional Development topics be sent out to parents prior to days when students are not in school due to Teacher Professional Development.

Dr. Levy mentioned recent legislative updates, and noted that she will discuss them in more depth at the individual meetings in September.

There was a first reading of the proposed calendar of BOE meetings for Jan. – Dec. 2015.

There was a discussion regarding the possibility of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for legal services. Some members felt that it would be fiscally prudent to put out an RFP for legal services on a regular basis. Other members stated that it doesn't make sense to do it at a time when the current legal counsel is fully entrenched in a couple of in depth projects. Additionally, it was noted that there are in actuality only three firms that should be used for education law in Connecticut, and that all will price out similarly. It was further noted that cost is not the only consideration, as one must consider level of service, dedication of service, and historical knowledge by current counsel. Some members requested that the possibility of an RFP be revisited in December, while others voiced their opinion that if the Boards were very unlikely to switch, why revisit that soon, or ask administrators to spend time putting together and administering an

RFP. After lengthy discussion, there was a general consensus to table the matter until the December Joint Board meeting.

#### Committee Reports

None – Committees are all scheduled to meet in September as listed.

#### Assistant Superintendent's Report

Dr. Beekley gave an update on Professional Development and Curriculum.

There will be NWEA training for teachers next week. Also, teachers will work on gathered data at their October Professional Development (PD) day. Elementary educators not using Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) testing (e.g. kindergarten and grade 1 teachers, math consultants, language arts specialists, art, music and physical education instructors) will work on building curriculum maps to help provide more consistency across all schools. Middle School teachers not using MAP testing will be provided with PD for writing instruction, while similar high school teachers will continue work on their upcoming NEASC process.

Dr. Beekley also reported that quite a bit of curriculum work was done over the summer by teachers on all levels and in a variety of areas. Work will continue throughout the year.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None present

On motion duly made and seconded, the Essex and Region 4 Boards unanimously VOTED to move into Executive Session at 8:55 p.m. as noted on the agenda.

The Region 4 Board moved into Executive Session for strategy discussion regarding pending litigation.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION** – Personnel – Presentation of Superintendent's Goals – (it was decided that this will be done at individual Board meetings in September.

#### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Next Regular Joint BOE Meeting, Oct. 2, 2014 @ 7:00 p.m.

Second Reading and VOTE on BOE Meeting calendar for upcoming calendar year (Oct.)

Second Reading and VOTE on Policy #5114 Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process (Oct.)

Discussion and possible VOTE regarding level of detail in Board minutes (Oct.)

Discussion and possible VOTE regarding possibility of Request for Proposal for Legal Services (Dec.)

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

On Motion duly made and seconded, the Deep River and Essex Boards of Education unanimously VOTED to adjourn at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

---

Jennifer Bryan, Clerk