

**THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO BOARD APPROVAL AT THE  
February 26, 2015 MEETING  
Joint Board of Education Committee**

**December 04, 2014**

A regular meeting of the Joint Board of Education Committee was held on Thursday, December 04, 2014 in the John Winthrop Middle School Library, with the following Board Members present:

CHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION: David Fitzgibbons, Robert Bibbiani, Rodney Alston, Charlene Fearon (no quorum)

DEEP RIVER BOARD OF EDUCATION: Michelle Grow, Dave Berardis, Miriam Morrissey, Nelle Andrews (no quorum)

ESSEX BOARD OF EDUCATION: Lon Seidman, Adam Conrad, Loretta McCluskey, Mark Watson, Carolyn Rotella

REGION 4 BOARD OF EDUCATION: Chris Riley, Lauri Wichtowski, Jennifer Clark, Mario Gioco, Ann Monaghan, Elaine Fitzgibbons, Jane Cavanaugh, Leigh Rankin

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

Audience of Citizens: none present

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

The Chairs of the Essex Boards and Region 4 Board of Education called their respective Boards to order at 7:02 p.m. The Chester and Deep River Boards did not have 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 October 02, 2014 regular meeting of the Joint Board.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** – no comments were made

**OTHER ITEMS –**

Director of Technology, Pam Murphy and Technology Integration Specialist, Kirsten Reynolds presented to the Boards on where they've been going with technology integration since the beginning of the year. They reviewed survey responses from teachers in September that allowed Ms. Murphy and Ms. Reynolds to assess technology needs, that they have begun to address. They have been conducting lots of technology training for all of the teachers on existing district technologies. An online videotape lesson archive has been created from these voluntary trainings for any teachers who couldn't attend, or who did attend, but would like more

time with the training. Board members asked several questions and Dr. Levy also discussed the possibility of digital teaching in the event of a long term school closure due to some emergency situation, i.e. ebola outbreak or H1N1 pandemic.

Ms. Murphy and Ms. Reynolds noted that a follow-up survey was sent to teachers this week and so far they have received over 50 responses verbalizing that the teachers are embracing what the position of Technology Integration Specialist has to offer and that they appreciate the support they are receiving. Ms. Murphy and Ms. Reynolds will continue to monitor the effectiveness of this position and continue to assess needs and adjust support and training opportunities accordingly.

## **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 September.

### Superintendent's Report

Dr. Levy presented a district-wide look at the major 2015-16 budget drivers in order to share a comprehensive look across all of the schools. All 4 districts are looking at significant drops in enrollment over the next 6 years. There is a projected overall drop to 1377 students expected in 2020-21 down from a 2009-10 high enrollment number of 2184 students. Dr. Levy noted that based on this fact alone it behooves the districts to look at an alternative governance structure, (regionalization), to feasibly deal with this drop in enrollment.

Dr. Levy covered general major budget considerations including contractual increase obligations, health insurance, continuation of the technology lease, and unanticipated special education costs. She also covered additional recommendations and considerations including an ELL (English Language Learner) teacher, math curriculum specialist, district data backup system, and maintenance for ASA (District Firewall) Equipment.

Dr. Levy also reviewed additional budget considerations for each school building. Budget workshops for 2015-16 begin with Supervision District Budget Workshop #1 on Dec 9<sup>th</sup> @ 6:00 p.m. in Central Office. She said that she hopes the Board members will look collectively at all of the needs across all of the districts as they move through the process.

Dr. Levy discussed the need to move forward on regionalization, and soon. She reported that all three First Selectmen are in favor of coming together as a region. Starting in January, she will meet with the Board chairs, and 1 or 2 reps from each Board, as well as town stakeholders. Dr. Levy stated that she believes the time to do this is now – educationally, financially, and for the best opportunities for the citizens of the three member towns. She asked Board Chairs to determine two people from each of their Boards to work on this regionalization effort; to determine a process; and how best to share information with all stakeholders.

Dr. Levy read a letter she shared earlier with the Supervision District Committee. It was the retirement letter from Dr. Joanne Beekley, Assistant Superintendent – effective June 30, 2015. Dr. Levy noted that Dr. Beekley has served 38 years in education with 11 of those in either Essex or Central Office. Mr. Seidman thanked Dr. Beekley for her excellent service to the students, staff, and parents of all of the districts.

A discussion, previously tabled at the August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2014 Joint BOE meeting, regarding the possibility of a request for proposal (RFP) for legal services was once again tabled due to two of the four boards not having a quorum present. The discussion will be placed on the February 26<sup>th</sup> Joint BOE agenda.

### Committee Reports

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

- #4112.4/4212.4 Health Examination (Tabled for further review by Policy Committee)
- #5145 Notice of Rights Under Section 504 Rehabilitation Act
- #1112.6 Videotaping of Staff and Students

Policy Committee Chair Jennifer Clark reviewed the policies up for second reading as listed above. She reported that various comments, questions, and suggestions received from Board members after the first reading were taken under consideration by the Policy Committee and largely integrated into the versions proposed for vote this evening.

There was a question regarding the origin of the language in the third paragraph in Policy #5145. It was reported that the language was based on law directly from the Boards' attorney.

When the discussion was completed, Mr. Seidman suggested voting on both policies under one motion.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Essex and Region 4 Boards unanimously VOTED to approve the following policies - Policy #5145 Notice of Rights Under Section 504 Rehabilitation Act as presented and Policy #1112.6 Videotaping of Staff and Students as presented. (*The Chester and Deep River Boards will vote on the policies at their individual meetings in January*)

Policy Committee Chair Jennifer Clark presented the following policies for a first reading:

- #6142.101 Wellness Policy
- #4112.8/4212.8 Nepotism
- #4117.4 Non-renewal /Suspension
- #4118.23/4218.23 Conduct
- #4121 Substitute Teachers
- #4131 Staff Development

There were some questions raised on the Wellness policy. Chair Seidman asked that as it was just a first reading, anyone with questions please contact the Joint BOE Policy Committee Chair or their Board's Policy Committee representative to share any questions or concerns, as well as during the discussion of pending policies at their January individual Board meetings.

Joint BOE Finance Committee Report – Mr. Sawyer reported that the Finance Committee held a meeting on November 18th. They discussed the status of several audits, which are all in full swing. The Committee heard a presentation by Joe Spurgeon, the districts' agent of record for health insurance, who talked to the Committee about various portions of the Affordable Care Act including the looming "Cadillac tax" coming into play in 2018. This is something the Boards will need to be cognizant of in future contract negotiations. Mr. Sawyer also reported that the State of the Medical Insurance fund is healthy.

The Joint BOE Curriculum Committee Report – Committee Chair Mr. Fitzgibbons reported that they met on November 18<sup>th</sup> and discussed the following: Professional Development for Paraeducators; Educator Evaluation and MAP/SBAC Testing; and the Art K-12 educators gave a wonderful presentation.

Assistant Superintendent's Report

Dr. Beekley gave an update on Professional Development and Curriculum. She reported that everything is moving along and the Boards will continue to hear reports on MAP throughout the school year.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** none made

The Board moved into Executive Session at 8:10 p.m. for a Personnel matter.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION** – Personnel – Mid-Year Evaluation of the Superintendent

The Board moved out of Executive Session at 8:58 p.m.

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- Next Regular Joint BOE Meeting, February 26, 2015 @ 7:00 p.m.
- Second Reading and VOTE on pending policies (Feb.)
- Discussion and possible VOTE regarding possibility of RFP for legal services (Feb.)
- Executive Session for Superintendent to Present Self-Evaluation (Apr)
- Vote on Meeting Nutritional Guidelines for Healthy Foods Certification and Reimbursement (Apr)

**ADJOURNMENT:**

On Motion duly made and seconded, the Essex and Region 4 Boards of Education unanimously VOTED to adjourn at 8:59 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Jennifer Bryan, Clerk