

***THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO BOARD APPROVAL AT THE
April 03, 2014 MEETING
Joint Board of Education Committee***

February 27, 2014

A regular meeting of the Joint Board of Education Committee was held on Thursday, February 27, 2014 in the John Winthrop Middle School Library, with the following Board Members present:

CHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION:	Wendy King, Dave Fitzgibbons, Ashley Marsh, Arthur Henick, Robert Bibbiani, Rodney Alston, Vacancy, Vacancy, Vacancy
DEEP RIVER BOARD OF EDUCATION:	Christine Daniels, Jim Olson, Dave Berardis, Miriam Morrissey, Nelle Andrews, Augusta Ferretti
ESSEX BOARD OF EDUCATION:	Lon Seidman, Adam Conrad, DG Fitton, Loretta McCluskey, Mark Watson, Carolyn Rotella
REGION 4 BOARD OF EDUCATION:	Chris Riley, Mario Gioco, Ann Monaghan, Elaine Fitzgibbons, Jane Cavanaugh, Leigh Rankin, Laurie Wichtowski

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

Audience of Citizens: 3

CALL TO ORDER

Supervision District Committee Chair Christine Daniels called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m..

The Chairs of the Deep River, Essex Boards and Region 4 Board of Education called their respective Boards to order at 7:03 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 05, 2013 regular meeting of the Joint Board.

PUBLIC COMMENT – no comments were made

OTHER ITEMS –

None needed

REPORTS

Financial Status Update

Mr. Sawyer was unable to attend the meeting this evening. Dr. Levy handed out Mr. Sawyer's financial report and noted that he will do a more detailed discussion at the upcoming individual monthly Board meetings.

Dr. Levy presented the proposed Supervision District Budget for 2014-15. On February 20th the Supervision District Committee voted to approve this budget and to present it for vote to the Joint Boards this evening.

Dr. Levy clarified the main items in the proposed budget, including a proposed, non-certified, non-administrative, technology trainer position, the need for which would be assessed year-to-year. Dr. Levy noted that it would not be a union covered position and that the position was first asked for in the 2013-14 budget, but removed during budget deliberations last year. She further noted that the position will have a direct impact on students by helping teachers better integrate technology into classrooms.

Various Supervision District Committee members voiced their opinion on the budget, and in particular, the technology coordinator position. Discussed was how Committee members came to their decisions throughout the process of multiple workshops. There was a lengthy discussion regarding both the budget and the proposed position in particular.

The floor was opened to public comment.

Ivoryton resident Chris Pagliuco, who has children at Essex Elementary School and is a teacher in Madison, voiced his support for the proposed technology coordinator position. He stated that as a teacher and as a parent, he is very passionate about children's needs in the classroom, and he is proud and thrilled to hear that our districts want to support teachers in this way. He shared his own experiences as a teacher, and talked about the loss of time spent with students, and on student needs, when a teacher needs to spend additional learning time with hardware and software instead of with students. He stated that he believes it is a matter of efficiency in the classroom, and that the Boards will get more from their teachers when those teachers are taught to use the available technology in the proper way.

A lengthy discussion, both for and against the need for the position, was held.

On motion duly made and seconded the Chester Board of Education, Deep River Board of Education, and Essex Board of Education unanimously VOTED to approve the Supervision District 2014-15 budget as proposed in the gross amount of \$6,621,307. The Region 4 Board of Education VOTED (Yes 4 / No 3 - *M. Gioco, L. Rankin, A. Monaghan*; Motion passed) to approve the Supervision District 2014-15 budget as proposed in the gross amount of \$6,621,307.

Dr. Levy discussed why the transitional kindergarten program was not being included in any of the budget proposals as had been anticipated. She reported that although the program was originally supported by the State Department of Education, upon further review, the State

expressed concern over a few of the program aspects. Therefore, upon speaking with the State Department and learning of their legal team's advice, it will not be proposed in any of the 2014-15 budgets. The student issues may instead be addressed through expanded, universal preschool in the future.

Dr. Levy also noted that with declining enrollments in all three towns, there is a need to get together as a community, to strive for efficiency and to be fiscally responsible. As enrollment continues to decline it will impact school and thus town finances. To that end, she will be forming a task force including Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance and Board of Education representatives, as well as parents and teachers. She will be sending out invitations in the near future.

Dr. Levy mentioned that work continues on the teacher evaluation plan and the Boards will receive an update from Dr. Beekley later in the meeting. The State's position on teacher evaluations is very much in flux, however the districts have an excellent relationship with their teachers, and administration has had ongoing discussions throughout the year. The districts will continue to do the right thing for our students and our teachers.

Joint BOE Policy Committee – The Committee met on January 21st, and recommends the following policies for a First Reading this evening:

- #5114 Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process – Students
- #4111.1/4211.1 Equal Employment Opp/Affirm Action – Personnel
- #4111.3 Minority Staff Recruitment Plan – Personnel
- #4112.6 Personnel Records – Personnel

Dr. Levy presented the above and briefly discussed each policy for a first reading. She noted that there will be discussions as needed at individual BOE meetings this month, and if any Board members have any questions, and they can also contact their Board's Policy Committee representative. The policies will come back before the Joint Boards in April for a second reading and vote.

Joint BOE Finance Committee – The Committee met on January 21, 2014. Chair Mark Watson reported that the Committee spoke with Joe Spurgeon, the insurance account representative from Lindberg and Ripple. He reported on claims activity and renewal projections, including anticipated future impacts of the Affordable Care Act. The Committee also discussed the proposed business manual and will continue to review it at future meetings.

Joint BOE Curriculum Committee - The Committee met on January 21, 2014. Chair David Fitzgibbons reported that the group discussed and defined its role prior to discussing Common Core Curriculum, as well as student and teacher evaluations.

Assistant Superintendent's Report

Dr. Beekley gave an update on Educator Evaluations. The State has recently approved some flexibility in the original guidelines that were created in 2013. The Professional Development and Evaluation Committee met recently and discussed the flexibility opportunities. Because the districts have created their own hybrid and did not adopt the State's SEED plan, part and parcel, the districts' currently approved plan was deemed preferable and no flexibility in student goals is

being sought for this year. However, the committee is still hashing out changes that may be requested for next year.

Dr. Beekley reported that the districts will avail themselves of the opportunity for fewer observations next year in those teachers that meet the required high rating level to qualify for that. In summary, the districts will end up with a plan very similar to the plan that was in place prior to the State requiring changes be made. Dr. Beekley will have the evaluation plan for vote at the Joint meeting in June, and will need to resubmit it to the State by June 30th for approval.

Questions and comments were fielded.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None made

There was a brief discussion regarding regional calendars.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

7.1 Next Regular Joint BOE Meeting, April 03, 2014 @ 7:00 p.m.

7.2 Vote on Meeting Nutritional Guidelines for Healthy Foods Certification and Reimbursement (Apr.)

ADJOURNMENT:

On Motion duly made and seconded, the Chester, Deep River, Essex and Region No. 4 Boards of Education unanimously VOTED to adjourn 8:19 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Bryan, Clerk