

***THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO BOARD APPROVAL AT THE  
February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2013 MEETING  
Joint Board of Education Committee***

**December 05, 2013**

A regular meeting of the Joint Board of Education Committee was held on Thursday, December 05, 2013 in the John Winthrop Middle School Library, with the following Board Members present:

CHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION: Wendy King, Ashley Marsh, Arthur Henick, Robert Bibbiani, Rodney Alston, David Fitzgibbons, Vacancy, Vacancy, Vacancy

DEEP RIVER BOARD OF EDUCATION: Jim Olson, Dave Berardis, Miriam Morrissey, Nelle Andrews, Hadley Kornacki, Michelle Grow, Augusta Ferretti

ESSEX BOARD OF EDUCATION: Lon Seidman, DG Fitton, Loretta McCluskey, Mark Watson, Carolyn Rotella

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

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

Audience of Citizens: 3

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

The Chairs of the Deep River, Essex Boards and Region 4 Board of Education called their respective Boards to order at 7:02 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 October 03, 2013 regular meeting of the Joint Board.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** – no comments were made

## **OTHER ITEMS –**

District Attorney, Kevin Roy of Shipman and Goodwin, reviewed key provisions in the administrators contract for 2014-17. Salaries and insurance were the main items of note.

He gave a detailed explanation of the negotiation process and reasons for the agreed upon contract numbers.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Deep River, Essex, and Region 4 BOE unanimously VOTED to ratify the agreement between the Chester Board of Education, Deep River Board of Education, Essex Board of Education, Regional School District No. 4 Board of Education, Regional School District No. 4 Supervision District Committee, and the Regional School District No. 4 Administrators Association for July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2017. The Chester Board VOTED (4 yes, 1 opposed, Arthur Henick – motion passed) to ratify the contract as presented. The Supervision District Committee VOTED (10 yes, 1 opposed, Arthur Henick – motion passed) to ratify the contract as presented.

## **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. He pointed out that overall, as a district-wide summary, if all districts were combined as one, the budget would be in good shape.

Dr. Levy reminded everyone that the All BOE Member workshop will be held on Saturday, Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 – 11:30 a.m. in the JWMS library.

Dr Levy reported that she will also be sending a letter to parents regarding a moment of silence on Dec 13<sup>th</sup> at the middle school and high school in observance of one year passing since the Sandy Hook School Tragedy. No observance activities are planned at the elementary schools, in recognition of the different levels of understanding that those students may have.

Dr. Levy also invited the Board members to a planned Community Dinner and Discussion to review the current strategic plan and goals on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2014. She also informed Board members that Valley football has made it to the semifinals and will be playing Brookfield at Cheshire soon. Their record is currently 11-0.

Superintendent Levy announced that the districts will be putting out to bid for legal services this year. Although she is extremely pleased with Shipman and Goodwin's services, it is just prudent to be able to go out to bid to see how they compare with other legal services and prices. The business office will be following the same process as they use from time to time to collect bids from accounting firms for the yearly audits.

Superintendent Levy talked about the state of schools; locally, statewide, and nationally. Safety is not something taken lightly by our schools. She mentioned the recent safety and security grant awarded to our schools. Monies from the grant will be spent on recommendations made by the security committee. She also stressed the importance of technology in student achievement. She said the administration strives to strike a balance of accountability in an academic venue and create a learning environment that fosters the love of learning and high achievement by both students and instructors. She further stated that each item in the proposed Supervision District

budget has been scrutinized and correlated with federal and state mandates, as well as our strategic goals and mission statement. She asked all members to consider that as they view the proposed budget.

Dr. Levy presented the proposed Supervision District Budget major budget drivers for 2014-15, noting it is a very preliminary budget that will be refined through upcoming budget workshops.

Dr. Levy described in detail the charge of the Supervision District, and how it dovetails into the individual Board budgets, providing shared services such as transportation, special education, Central Office administration, etc... She also reviewed how costs are assigned to each district based on ADM (Average Daily Membership).

Contractual Increases, Benefits, and Transportation are major considerations. Other considerations were also discussed, in particular, two recommended teaching positions (ELL and technology trainer), as well as increased Professional Development to fulfill mandated changes in evaluations.

#### Committee Reports

The Policy Committee will meet again on January 21, 2014.

Joint BOE Finance Committee – The Committee will meet again on January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

Joint BOE Curriculum Committee - will meet again on January 21, 2014.

#### Assistant Superintendent's Report

Dr. Beekley gave an update on Educator Evaluation Language and reviewed the enclosure that had been sent to the Boards. Because the State has requested a waiver from the Federal Government to not administer CMT or CAPT tests this year, the State needed to come up with new language to bridge over to the future SBAC testing results. The new language states that schools will use their own local measures to determine student progress until such time as the standardized state measures (SBAC) are in place (replacing CMT and CAPT).

She also discussed the K-8 Report Card Committee and reviewed the Board's enclosure. The report card format has not been updated in many years, approximately 13 or more years. As a result, the current report card doesn't match what teachers are talking to parents about regarding their child's progress. The Committee is working to come up with more helpful report card for parents' benefit. She invited any interested Board members to join the committee. The goal is for the new one to be in use by end of this year or in time for the first marking period of 2014-15.

She also gave a brief update on SBAC testing. At a recent State Dept. of Education meeting Superintendents and Assistant Superintendents were told that contrary to previous information given to them that the SBAC would be a computer adaptive test that would show a students' achievements below or above grade level, due to Federal requirements, the SBAC has had to pull back from that flexibility, and will now not be allowed to look outside grade-level bands. It is still adaptive, but only within the grade level, and will not move below or above the particular grade level band with any precision. So it will not be very helpful for teachers to truly know each student's achievement level. She has written an informative letter that is going out to

parents in their school's December newsletter to explain this change in previous information. She will be recommending that the districts work with NWEA (Northwest Education Association) and their measurement of academic progress (MAP) in order to provide this type of detailed information, and maximize the support to children either needing additional help, or to those who would benefit from accelerated projects, in order to fill that information gap and provide the missing assessments.

There was some discussion regarding the possible future implications of this development.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** none made

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

BOE Member Workshop, Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup> 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. JWMS

Next Regular Joint BOE Meeting, February 27, 2014 @ 7:00 p.m.

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 Chester, Deep River, Essex and Region No. 4 Boards of Education unanimously VOTED to adjourn 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Jennifer Bryan, Clerk