

Easton Board of Education Meeting
October 13, 2016
Minutes

Board of Education: Bindelglass, Bobroske (arrived at 7:40 pm), Chieda, Hicks, Parker
Administration: McMorran, Pierson Ugol, Sullivan, Edwards, Freeston, Fox Santora, Brownstein, Kaplan, Burke
Others: 15 members of the staff and public

Mr. Parker called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion; move that the Easton Board of Education accept the minutes of the regular meeting held on September 13, 2016. Hicks, Bindelglass. Approved with correction in name noted by Mr. Parker - John Simpson should be Jon Stinson. Unanimous.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Parker showed the book on random acts of kindness that Pamela Gupta had discussed at the September Board of Education meeting. He noted it is a great book and encourages everyone to read it.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION - PARENT DONATION AT SSES

Mrs. Fox Santora informed the Board that a parent who wishes to remain anonymous would like to donate \$500 to the Student Activity Fund to be used as a scholarship for students who may need help with funding to attend the 5th grade annual field trip to Nature's Classroom. Interested families would contact Mrs. Fox Santora.

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education accept the donation of \$500 for the SSES Student Activity Fund for the purpose stated. Bindelglass, Hicks. Approved. Unanimous.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION – NEW BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBER REPLACING DAN UNDERBERGER

Mr. Parker introduced Cindy Shortt who was recommended by the Easton Democratic Town Committee to replace Dan Underberger. Mrs. Shortt is a school counselor who moved to Easton three years ago with her family from Los Angeles, CA. She has two sons, a fifth grader at SSES and a ninth grader at JBHS. She has been an educator for over 18 years. She has a Masters in Educational Counseling and a certificate in educational therapy. Mrs. Shortt said that she believes in doing what's right for students and believes it is important to give back to the community. She has also been a member of ELF (Easton Learning Foundation) for three years.

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education accept Cindy Shortt as a new member of the Board. Chieda, Hicks. Approved. Unanimous. (Mrs. Bobroske had not arrived at time of vote.)

Mr. Parker advised Mrs. Shortt that her next step was to go to the town clerk at Easton Town Hall to be sworn in and told her the next meeting would be the tri-board meeting scheduled for the following Tuesday.

Mrs. Bobroske arrived at 7:40 p.m.

DISCUSSION – STUDENT PRESENTATION

The presentation has been postponed.

DISCUSSION – SCHOOL-WIDE GOALS

Mrs. Fox Santora shared the school-wide goals at SSES. The Academic Goal: By the close of the 2016-2017 school year, 85% of all K-5 students will be able to clearly and precisely construct viable arguments to support their own reasoning, and students in Gr 2-5 will also be able to critique the reasoning of others. 85% of all students will earn a score of 4 (Gr 2-5: or

better) on the Communication/Reasoning Rubric. Students at all grades will listen or read the arguments of others, decide whether they make sense and ask useful questions to clarify or improve the arguments. Mrs. Fox Santora explained the rubric that will be used.

Social/Community Goal: Of 100% of K-5 students at SSES, 90% of students who performed in the highest 25% of each classroom on the Emotion Regulation Inventory will develop an increase in understanding of their own emotions and apply strategies to increase effective emotional coping skills as measured by a 25% decrease on their Emotion Regulation Inventory score.

Mrs. Kaplan shared the school-wide goals at HMS. There are three goals:

- 1) Working in partnership with the school and community, students will demonstrate and apply the PRIDE attributes of character in various settings as measured by an increase in the pro-social indicators listed on the school climate survey. The student survey will be conducted in October. This will be used as a baseline for improvement.
- 2) As measured by 2017 SBA results, grade-level teams will aim for the following targets: - Grade 6 ELA 80.1% of students will meet level 3 or above - Grade 7 ELA 81.7% of students will meet level 3 or above - Grade 8 ELA 79.8% of students will meet level 3 or above - Grade 6 Math 71.87% of students will meet level 3 or above - Grade 7 Math 73.29% of students will meet level 3 or above - Grade 8 Math 85.6% of students will meet level 3 or above.
- 3) As measured by NWEA and performance tasks, students will show growth in their ability to construct meaning from a variety of challenging texts and resources and communicate their understanding in a variety of forms and contexts. Our success for this goal will be measured through NWEA by the number of students meeting growth projections as follows: . Grade 7 Math - We will increase the number of students meeting their growth projections in math from 38% to 50%. . Grade 8 Math - We will increase the number of students meeting their growth projections in math from 54% to 65%. . Grade 7 ELA - We will increase the number of students meeting their growth projections in ELA from 55% to 65%. . Grade 8 ELA - We will increase the number of students meeting their growth projections in ELA from 54% to 64%.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION– CABA POLICIES – FIRST READING

Dr. McMorran briefly reviewed eight CABA policies being presented to the Board of Education for a first reading.

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education accept the following eight policies for a first reading:

- 3152(a) Spending Public Funds for Advocacy
- 3323 Soliciting Prices (Bids and Quotations)
- 3520.11(a) Electronic Information Security
- 3520.12(a) Data-Based Information Management System
- 5131(a) Conduct and Discipline
- 5141.3(a) Health Assessments and Immunizations
- 6153.1 (a) Educational Tours
- 617.2(a) Preschool Special Education

Bobroske, Hicks. Approved. Unanimous.

Mr. Parker requested that Board members review the eight policies and bring their questions and suggested revisions to the next Board meeting. Questions may also be emailed to Dr. McMorran in the meantime.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Special Services: Tracy Edwards reported that the Special Education teachers and related service providers are working on the same goals presented by Mrs. Fox Santora and Mrs. Kaplan. Professional development was provided by Courtney Cotter of the Center for Children with Special Needs in supporting students from a social behavioral standpoint in the classroom, and included strategies to engage students. Similar professional development was also provided for the special education paraeducators. Ms. Edwards met with the preschool teachers from Easton and Redding working to align the programs and

giving the teachers an opportunity to collaborate. She explained the Board's obligation to students in the community in the birth to 3 age range. The district is required to provide services as soon as the child turns 3.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction: Dr. Pierson Ugol highlighted adult learning that goes on hand-in-hand with student learning. She also shared the Curriculum Steering Committee's focus on feedback during pre-kindergarten to grade 12 learning walks. She also spoke to the amount of time at Central Office that has been dedicated to addressing the new Student Data Privacy Act and the review of contracts required.

There was discussion about the rise in anxiety in students and various programs on building resiliency, including a program the PTA will be bringing to the schools in January for parents and teachers.

Director of Finance & Operations: Mrs. Sullivan reported that a letter has been sent out to parents/guardians by the superintendent about the Student Data Privacy Act and that a Webpage on the topic has been established on the Central Office Website. Health claims for the month of September were the lowest they have been in quite some time. The state recently cut from its budget and transferred to the Board of Education the cost of the fiber optic Internet connection – sending the Board a \$12,000 invoice. E-rate funding was requested and the district should receive 50% of the cost from that source. Septic work is continuing at SSES and is under budget according to Ed Nagy. Another legislation requires implementation of more extensive background checks on employees and contractors who have direct contact with students. New hires are hired temporarily until the background check is complete. Focus is on any incidence of child abuse or neglect. This will be a significant increase in the responsibilities of the Human Resources Department due to completion of forms that must be sent to other employers to complete and return.

Helen Keller Middle School: Mrs. Kaplan reported on certified staff absences for August 29-September 30, 11 teachers took sick days totaling 10.5 days. Three teachers took personal days 18 teachers were out for some or part of the day for district meetings and professional development totaling 21.5 days. One teacher took one day for family illness. Mrs. Kaplan reported that the Tri-State Consortium, a group of critical friends from other school districts across the tri-state area, will be visiting the middle schools in Easton and Redding for three days in October with a focus on middle school teaching and learning and the extent to which the middle schools reflect the ideals and characteristics presented by the National Middle School Association. The Consortium's observations and feedback are valuable and might lead to positive changes at the middle schools. Board members will be interviewed on October 19th. Mr. Hicks and Mr. Parker have already signed on. Other members are invited if they would like to participate. There were two occasions this past month when HKMS students involved in the peer leadership program went to Golden Hill Methodist Church in Bridgeport to serve dinner to people in the community and cleanup the kitchen afterward. Several CT schools have been invited as required by law to give presentations to 8th graders on alternative programs available to students other than Barlow. They included Global Studies School, Trumbull Agri-Science, Fairchild Wheeler, and RCA. Joel Barlow will also be giving a presentation. Mrs. Kaplan also mentioned the great work that a 7th grade teacher, Jennifer Rose, has done over the years to expose HKMS students to students in other countries. She will be presenting at an upcoming CT Geographic Alliance Conference on work she has done on global studies and also will be reporting to the Board.

Samuel Staples Elementary School: Mrs. Fox Santora reported that she served all lunches to students today in honor of National School Lunch Week. The PTA brought a copy of the *Kindness Grows* book for each classroom. Election day will be coming up and voting for the town will take place at SSES. That day the car line will be rerouted for parent pick up with the help of the Easton Police Department. SSES teacher attendance – 13 teachers took sick days totaling 12 days. 9 teachers took 7.5 personal days. 30 teachers were out for all or part of the day for district meetings and professional development total 17.5 such days. 9 teachers took 8.5 family illness days. A new state mandate is that the school must have an attendance review committee meet on a monthly basis to look at students who are chronically absence (meaning student is missing 10% of the academic days at any point that the report is run). 25 students have been out 10% or higher – most of them were ill but there were a handful of students who were away. Letters get sent to parents and meetings might be held.

Mrs. Cheida requested getting the teacher attendance reports in a written format broken down by grade level. Dr. Bindelglass stated that there is a significant concern by parents about the amount of time teachers are out of the classroom. It is understood that people need to be out when they are sick. The Board is particularly looking for a better understanding of the time out of the classroom for district meetings and professional development.

Superintendent: Dr. McMorran provided a draft of the contract with C.S. Explorers. He also shared a very long list of mandated trainings and related recordkeeping that are required for staff and school districts based on new state legislation.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Long-Range Planning Committee: Mr. Hicks reported that the committee met this past month and looked at some projects and goals such as assessing the capacity of the schools, what can be done with declining enrollment, and communication. Next meeting will be on November 14th.

Insurance Committee: The committee will be meeting on October 20th to see presentations by four insurance brokers. Two defibrillators have been received. Maintenance staff will be trained on how to maintain them. Staff will be trained on how to use them.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Mrs. Bobroske apologized for arriving late and missing the vote on the new Board member and welcomed Cindy Shortt to the Board.

Mr. Parker gave an update on the Bus Depot. Waiting on Planning and Zoning. Went back to DATTCO to find out where maintenance work could be done on buses if Easton did not provide that capability and what the cost would be.

Mrs. Cheida is hoping there will be some report in the local paper about the SBA scores that were discussed at last month's meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education adjourn the meeting. Bobroske, Hicks. Approved. Unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 pm

Submitted by Regina Bobroske, Secretary

Recorded by Vicki Cram