

*Filed subject to approval*

Easton Board of Education  
Meeting  
October 13 2015  
Minutes

Attendance:

Board of Education: Bobroske, Hicks, Horowitz, Parker, Peskay, Underberger

Administration: McMorran, Sullivan, Edwards, Freeston, Fox-Santora, Brownstein, Kaplan, Burke

Others: nine members of the staff and community

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 September 9, 2015 meeting as submitted. Hicks, Horowitz. Approved. Unanimous.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

Diane Ronen: Mrs. Ronen commented that the school calendar contains only 17 full weeks of education out of the 40 weeks, and there is a high number of minimum days scheduled. She requested consideration be given to the need for consistency in education and that it be addressed in the calendar planning.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Mr. Parker noted that this would be the last board meeting for Dr. Peskay and Mr. Horowitz. He thanked them for their years of service to the children and Easton community.

Dr. Underberger also thanked Mr. Horowitz and Dr. Peskay for their contributions to the education of Easton's children. He also thanked First Selectman Adam Dunsby for his work on the board of education prior to his election to the First Selectman post.

Dr. Underberger requested that the presentations made at board meetings be posted to the website. He also expressed his disappointment that the Region 9 Board of Education decided not to do breathalyzer testing at high school social events. Dr. Underberger commented that he received input from parents regarding the lack of outside recreational activity following lunch. This was eliminated due to inability to find aides to supervise activity. He would like to see HKMS staff volunteer to fill that need in the spring. Dr. Underberger added that he is on the Calendar Committee and the focus will be to get more teaching time during the year.

DISCUSSION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Director of Special Services, Tracy Edwards, provided an explanation of various acronyms used in special education. These included:

- IDEIA, Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act
- IDEA, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- FAPE, Free and Appropriate Education
- IEP, Individual Education Plan
- LRE, Least Restrictive Environment
- PPT, Planning and Placement Team

Discussion and questions followed. The material, A Guide to Special Education Terminology, will be posted to the website.

## DISCUSSION OF ASSESSMENT RESULTS—SMARTER BALANCED PRESENTATION

The results of the 2015 Smarter Balanced Assessment for Easton schools was presented. The administrators discussed the results and provided plans for addressing the results. This presentation will be posted to the website.

## ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

1. Apex Fun Run: SSES (Samuel Staples Elementary School), Mrs. Fox-Santora reported on the very successful fun run. The PTA sponsored activity began with discussions with the students on leadership, kindness, etc, collection of pledges for number of laps, and the running of the laps.
2. Jump Rope for Heart Association: SSES was recognized as one of the top 10 schools for participation in this spring event.
3. HOTS School Teaching Artist (SSES): The HOTS artists program will be dedicated to the third grade this year and will feature a Connecticut State Troubadour. The program will center on telling a story through music.
4. Artists' Spotlight (SSES): Mrs. Fox Santora recognized the students who are being recognized in October for their work.
5. Cluster Grouping (SSES): The professional development activity included a consultant who worked with teachers on working with above level math students.
6. Student Government (HKMS): Mrs. Kaplan announced results of Student Government election.
7. Author visit (HKMS): Mrs. Kaplan noted that author Alexander London shared his experiences with students at the PTA sponsored event.
8. Staff Professional Learning Groups (HKMS): Mrs. Kaplan noted that these learning groups concentrate on research based data that will assist to motivate and encourage student engagement.
9. Principal Coffee with Sixth Grade Parents (HKMS): The Principal Coffee included introduction of all of the emotional support people on staff.
10. NWEA Fall Testing (HKMS): The results of the NWEA test taken in the fall will be mailed to parents by the end of the week.
11. Special Education Update: Ms. Edwards reported that weekly meetings are being held in each of the schools for the entire Special Education staff members. These allow staff to discuss issues, plan programs, explore decisions, etc. The September 29 PD day allowed staff to meet cross district and a presentation on Dyslexia was held. Ms. Edwards is also working with Ms. Roszko at Joel Barlow High School on transition planning.

Director of Finance: Mrs. Sullivan reported that Health Insurance claims for September were high, about double the monthly budget. She added that the reserve balance is now a negative 370,000. Redding's claims are down, but Barlow's are also higher than budget. The Easton district is now looking in to borrowing from the other two districts, as has been done between the districts in the past. Mrs. Sullivan provided a listing of budget areas that could be reduced. Board members were in agreement that only the items that were running below budget should be reduced, specifically, the electricity, gas and unemployment compensation.

Board members discussed the available options, making budgetary reductions, continue to borrow from the ER9 Reserve, and requesting additional funding from the Town of Easton. There was a concern that the claims could continue at the high level. In addition, there is the potential for two unanticipated outplacements of special education student and associated expenses. There will be a transfer of funds and Mrs. Sullivan will advise the Board of Finance about the situation.

Mrs. Sullivan reported the electrical panel at SSES (a refurbished panel) worked for a while than quit. The panel is being replaced with a new one, with only the cost of the new panel not installation.

Food Service: the State of Connecticut has allowed the district to continue working with Chartwells for the remainder of the year, but the contract must be renewed for the following year. Mrs. Sullivan is still waiting for the State RFP (Request for Proposal).

The solar panels at SSES will be up and running by the end of the month.

Transportation: the arrangement with Dattco, including the purchase of the transportation fleet by the districts, was financially beneficial. There was no sales tax, property tax and vehicle registration fee. In addition, the financing costs were lower for the districts than what Dattco could achieve.

Mrs. Sullivan reported she attended a recent Easton Planning and Zoning meeting and reminded them that the school districts were considering the potential of a bus depot on the SSES site.

Superintendent: Dr. McMorran commented on education, the value of testing as one part of a suite of evaluation, and the use of test results.

#### AGENDA ADDITION

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education add to the agenda discussion and action on a transfer request for increasing health care claims. Underberger, Peskay. Approved. Unanimous.**

#### DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON A TRANSFER REQUEST FOR INCREASING HEALTH CARE CLAIMS

Dr. Underberger recommended that \$45,000 in identified budget savings be transferred to the Health Care Reserve Account.

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve the transfer of funds from Account 11-1100-251, Unemployment Compensation, \$6,000**

**Account 12-1100-251, Unemployment Compensation, \$2,000**

**Account 12-2600-622, Electricity, \$30,000**

**Account 11-2600-623, Gas, \$4,000**

**Account 12-2600-623, Gas, \$3,000**

**To: Account 11-1100-270, Health Insurance-Certified Staff, \$22,500 To: Account 12-1100-270, Health Insurance-Certified Staff, \$22,500**

**Motion by Underberger, seconded by Hicks. Approved. Unanimous.**

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS

Dr. Underberger announced the Calendar Committee would meet on Wednesday 10/28/2015 at 8 am.

#### BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Parker and Dr. McMorran spent a day touring both Helen Keller and Samuel Staples schools to observe the teachers and students.

Dr. Peskay urged the public to attend the board of education candidate debate if one is scheduled.

Mrs. Bobroske thanked Dr. Peskay and Mr. Horowitz for their service on the BOE.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

None

#### ADJOURNMENT

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education adjourn the meeting. Underberger, Horowitz.  
Approved. Unanimous.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:41 pm

Submitted by Regina Bobroske, Board of Education Secretary

Recorded by Mary Maday