

Filed subject to approval

Easton Board of Education
Meeting
May 9, 2017
Minutes

Board of Education: Bindelglass (7:58 pm), Bobroske, Cheida (7:38 pm), Parker, Shortt
Administration: McMorran, Lagas, Pierson Ugol, Edwards, Fox Santora, Kaplan, Brownstein, Burke
Others: 14 members of the staff and community

Mr. Parker called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm. at the Helen Keller Middle School Library Media Center.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There was no quorum at the time of this agenda item.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Nicole Solis, Co-President of the Easton Education Association, read her letter addressed to the Board of Education which expressed the certified staff's disappointment by the Board's collection of personal and sick leave data as well as public comments made by "a Board member at the April 18 meeting asking administrators if the teachers use of personal leave has changed since the data collection began." She expressed that "the Easton staff has become further demoralized as they see that they are no longer trusted or respected by this Board." She went on to add that to the EEA's knowledge there has not been a single instance of sick or personal leave misuse and asked that the Board discontinue the collection of this data and focus only on the professional development days that teachers are not in the classroom. She felt this would restore the goodwill and trust that has existed between the Board and Easton educators for many years.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mrs. Shortt stated that she was moved by the letter from the EEA and would hate to think anyone is feeling demoralized. She stated that she truly appreciates everyone's hard work.

Mr. Parker thanked the PTA and the parent community for supporting the budget. Everyone's efforts are greatly appreciated.

Mrs Cheida arrived at 7:38 pm.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion: move to Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter, the appointment of the new Assistant Principal at Helen Keller Middle School. Bobroske, Shortt. Approved. Unanimous. Dr. McMorran, Dr. Pierson Ugol, and Susan Kaplan were invited into the session.

The meeting recessed at 7:39 pm.

RECONVENE

The chair reconvened the meeting to public session at 7:49 pm.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON APPOINTMENT OF ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL OF HELEN KELLER MIDDLE SCHOOL

Dr. McMorran explained that an extensive search was performed for the new assistant principal at the middle school. There were over 100 applications. Fourteen candidates were interviewed. An interview panel consisting of administrators, Board of Education members, teachers and support staff recommended two candidates be brought forward to a final interview with the superintendent. Dr. McMorran announced that

Annie Mohr will be appointed for the position. Annie has spent her entire professional career of 17 years at Helen Keller Middle School. Mrs. Mohr thanked the Board of Education and stated that she “was humbled to accept a leadership role in a place I call home.”

Dr. Bindelglass arrived at 7:58 pm.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON HEALTH INSURANCE REVIEW

Dr. Lagas introduced Robert Fitzpatrick and Jay Fiorella of Brown & Brown, the district’s insurance consultant. A 15-minute presentation was given with the recommendation that the Board stay in the self-insured plan. Based on their claims analysis, they also recommended that the Board give strong consideration to funding the Health Insurance Reserve to \$540,911.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION: ALLOCATION OF UNSPENT FUNDS

Dr. McMorran reported on the status of the current year budget, providing a detailed handout. As of April 21st expended funds and encumbered funds for salaries leaves unspent funds currently at \$711,304. Some of the savings are attributable to hiring and changes in personnel that occurred during the year. Dr. McMorran recommended putting unspent funds in the Health Insurance Reserve at year-end.

The consensus of the Board was to follow the advice of the insurance consultants and fund the Health Insurance Reserve with unspent funds at the end of the fiscal year and, depending on the amount of unspent funds at that time, return some monies to the town. A vote on the transfer of funds to the Health Insurance Reserve will be made at the June meeting.

Mr. Parker suggested using unspent funds to upgrade the telephone system and soffit repair at Helen Keller Middle School. The technology that the current phone system uses is outdated and parts cannot be replaced. Dr. Lagas noted that he had received a quote from a state-approved contractor on the phone system for \$9,000. He also estimated that the cost of the soffit repair would be \$13,700. He requested approval of these expenditures.

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve expenditures of \$9,000 to upgrade the phone system and up to \$13,700 for soffit repair at Helen Keller Middle School with the transfer of funds to the appropriate budget lines being made. Shortt, Bobroske. Approved. Unanimous.

DISCUSSION: TRI-STATE CONSORTIUM REPORT – REVIEW OF ER9 MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Dr. Pierson Ugol and Mrs. Kaplan reported on the findings of the Tri-State Consortium team who visited the Easton and Redding Middle Schools in October 2016. The report will be posted on the Website. The visiting team affirmed the strengths of the programs in both middle schools and alignment with the key attributes of outstanding middle schools. Areas of growth will continue to be explored by the administrative team.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION: TERMINATION OF TENURE TEACHER CONTRACT FOR BUDGETARY REASONS

Dr. McMorran reminded the Board that one physical education teaching position was cut at Helen Keller Middle School for the 2017-2018 school year. This reduction in force results in the termination of tenured teacher’s contract.

Motion: move that the contract of employment of Timothy Murray be terminated at the end of the current school year, effective July 1, 2017, due to reduction in force and that the Superintendent of Schools is directed to advise such person in writing of this action. Bindleglass, Shortt. Approved. Unanimous.

DISCUSSION: STATUS OF EXECUTIVE SEARCHES FOR SUPERVISOR OF SPECIAL SERVICES AND DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & OPERATIONS

Dr. McMorran reported that eleven applications were received from viable candidates for the Director of Finance & Operations position that is available July 1, 2017. Screening interviews are underway with six candidates, which include two-hour in-person conversations with each candidate and the superintendent and Dr. Lagas.

Three finalists will be moved forward to a panel interview that will include administrators and Board members. Dr. Bindelglass and Mr. Parker will represent the Easton Board of Education.

A search for a Supervisor of Special Services, a position also available July 1, 2017, is also underway. A document review of 17 applicants was performed by Tracy Edwards, Director of Special Services, and Dr. Pierson Ugol. Ten candidates came in for screening interviews, and five will be moving forward to a full committee interview. The committee interview will take place on May 18th.

Tracy Edwards also announced that she had accepted a position as Director of Special Services at The Sherman School in Sherman, CT. This means an additional search will have to occur to fill the vacancy this will create for Easton/Redding.

DISCUSSION: CURRENT ENROLLMENT – STATUS OF KINDREGARTEN AND OPEN CHOICE REQUESTS FOR PLACEMENT

Mrs. Fox Santora reported that the projected enrollment for kindergarten for 2017-2018 was 77. Seventy-five (75) registration packets were sent out. Fifty-one (51) have been returned. There have been two non-resident teachers requesting that their children enroll in kindergarten, and there are three applications from Open Choice students whose older siblings have attended the Easton/Region 9 school system. Discussion followed about possible class sizes that might occur. The decision was to revisit this topic at the June meeting when there will be updated information about additional enrollment packets received.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION: POLICY REVIEW FOR FIRST READING

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education accept Policy 9325, Bylaws of the Board: Meeting Conduct for first reading. Bindelglass, Bobrokse. Approved. Unanimous.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION: POLICY REVIEW FOR SECOND READING

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve the following policies with one change noted for Policy 5145.6:

Policy 5125: Family Education Rights & Privacy – Appendix

Policy 5131.911: Hazing Bullying

Policy 5141.4: Reporting Child Abuse, Neglect, Sexual Assault (*Newest Version*)

Policy 5141.21: Administering Medication

Policy 5144: Discipline

Policy 5144.1: Use of Physical Force / Restraint, Seclusion

Policy 5144.5: Progressive Discipline / Promoting Positive Student Behavior

Policy 5145: Civil and Legal Rights & Responsibilities

Policy 5145.6: Student Grievance Procedures (strike final sentence under grievance procedure)

Policy 5145.53: Gender Identity and Expression (Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Youth)

Policy 5145.511: Exploitation; Sexual Harassment

Bobroske, Cheida. Approved. Unanimous.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Helen Keller Middle School: Susan Kaplan reported on a job fair organized by the PTA. Parents came in during lunch periods and gave presentations on their careers. Teacher appreciation week was wonderful. The Spaghetti Dinner included meatballs in the spaghetti for the first time, contributed by an 8th grade parent. The Art teacher discovered mold in the Art Room storage closet and under the sink. The room was immediately vacated, and Art classes are held in a different location. The mold remediation people responded immediately. The damage was extensive caused by a pinhole leak in a pipe.

Samuel Staples Elementary School: Mrs. Fox Santora reported that seven SSES students went to the UCONN Invention Convention. Two students, Helena Zima and Catalina Depardieu, were invited to go to the Nationals. She also reported that the DARE graduation was wonderful. She also thanked the PTA for the Spring Fling and the Teacher Appreciation they organized.

Interim Director of Finance: Dr. Lagas reported on the health insurance analysis. The March claims were \$191,499. He discussed budget transfers which included \$2,820 that is not needed to inspect the septic tank as frequently as thought when the budget was prepared so the money was transferred to repair some stucco at SSES.

Special Services: Tracy Edwards reported that hiring of staff for the Extended School Year is complete. Assessments of students are ongoing. Hiring of staff for 2017-2018 is also underway.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction: Dr. Pierson Ugol highlighted the return visit of Dr. Yeap Ban Har, an expert in the field of mathematics education. The response from the staff K-12 was extremely positive and supports professional development as well as vertical alignment across levels.

Superintendent: Dr. McMorran reported on the certified staff attendance and stated that at no time was it suggested that anyone was misusing personal time off. He is simply reporting on data and pattern analysis.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Parker reported that the ER9 Food Services Committee met and will recommend at the tri-Board meeting that Chartwells' contract be renewed for one year. He thanked Dr. Pierson Ugol and Laura Ponzio for their work.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

None.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 10:14 pm.

Submitted by Regina Bobroske, Board Secretary

Recorded by Vicki Cram