

Board of Education Meeting
October 21, 2014

Call to Order

Board Chair Sanborn called the meeting to order at 5:09 p.m. in the Suffield High School Media Center. Present: Board members Lori D'Ostuni, Scott Schneider, Natalie Semyanko, Sue Porcello, Mary Roy, Jeanne Gee, Mary Lou Sanborn, George Beiter, Michelle Zawawi, and Board Consultant Joe Townsley

Executive Session

Gee moved, Semyanko seconded to go into executive session at 5:09 p.m. for the purpose of reviewing the performance by individual Board members.

Semyanko moved, Gee seconded to come out of executive session at 6:30 p.m.

Regular Session

Board Chair Sanborn called the meeting to order at 6:37 p.m. in the Suffield High School Media Center. Present: Board members Lori D'Ostuni, Scott Schneider, Natalie Semyanko, Sue Porcello, Mary Roy, Jeanne Gee, Mary Lou Sanborn, George Beiter, Superintendent, Karen Baldwin, Assistant Superintendent, Jim Collin and Business Manager, Bill Hoff

Public Comment

Susan Hart, 15 Riverview Drive, reminded the Board that Board member Gee suggested at a previous meeting to put out a survey of middle school stakeholders at conference times to get feedback from parents about the new middle school scheduling implemented this year. She would like to see a survey so parents can give their opinions.

Suffield High School Student Representative

Taylor Schwab reported to the Board events happening at SHS:

- Classes working on spirit night
- Seniors busy applying to college
- Class of 2017 having their class ring presentation
- Agri-science students are utilizing the Large Animal Facility. They started the Suds and Buds program where teachers can bring in their dogs to be washed and groomed.
- On November 6-8, the SHS drama club will be performing Romeo and Juliet
- National Honor Society is holding its induction ceremony on October 22
- SHS is celebrating Spanish heritage month
- Clubs have just started: Best Buddies held a potluck dinner, Unified sports basketball has met, and the Booster Club donated \$800 to the swim team.
- The school store is open every day.
- Mr. Moccio is working to improve school spirit, students will be voting on an emblem.
- The guidance department is busy helping students with the college process.
- Freshman orientation was very successful. The new administration and students were welcoming and cheerful.
- The SWAT team is very helpful with supporting students and teachers with their Chromebooks. Most classes have fully adopted Chromebooks.

- Taylor is a member of the State Student Advisory Council in Education. The committee is discussing ideal start times for schools, community service hours as a requirement for graduation, and standardized test program for students.
- SHS Advisory is discussing how to make the time more pertinent to students' career interests.
- There was a safety internet program at the high school today. Students reported the presentation was an eye-opener.

Communications

Board Chair Sanborn received an email from former Suffield High School Assistant Principal, Joe Blake. He thanked Board members for their support during his tenure in Suffield. He had recently received the Assistant Principal of the Year award. Board member Sanborn wished him well in his new position in Coventry.

Approval of Minutes

Semyanko moved, Beiter seconded to approve the minutes of the October 7, 2014 Board meeting. Board member Gee wanted it notated under the Agri-Science update that she suggested the Board reach out to Enfield in order to maintain as many Enfield students in the program as possible. All members voted in favor of the amended minutes.

Discussion/Action Items

- **Class Size Report**
Superintendent Baldwin said the class size report is provided to the Board annually based on October 1 data. Dr. Collin worked with building principals to compile the data. Dr. Collin said the main takeaway is the small class sizes overall. The data helps to demonstrate consistency in the unified arts program. Going forward, the administration will look at participation in unified arts classes in the middle school to help determine offerings at the high school. Dr. Collin noted a few small unified arts classes, which was due to those classes being second semester offerings and not corrected/adjusted over the summer. He said that issue will be resolved going forward.

Board members had concerns about small class sizes in band and chorus in 7th grade and drop-out rates in World Language at the high school after giving high school credit to students who pass French or Spanish in the middle school. Board member D'Ostuni would like data on middle school and high school World Language enrollment over the last 5 years in order to review if there is cause for concern. Board members asked for clarification on certain course names. Board member Gee requested historical data around grade 7 accelerated rates in ELA and Math to see if the numbers shifted, since they were the first grade experiencing the unlevelled environment in sixth grade. Dr. Collin said that data was previously reported out to the Board. The number of students participating in accelerated classes has increased by approximately 14%. Dr. Baldwin said administration can give a report around the Standards-Based Report tool at a future meeting. Board members inquired as to how students are performing on AP tests. Dr. Collin said the Board will see a report in November on SAT, ACT, and AP participation and scores. He said last year there was solid participation and scores. Administration is currently reviewing the data to inform instruction. Board members asked for the CAPT Science scores with next steps and historical data in the November report.

- September 2014 Financial Report

Mr. Hoff reviewed the September financial report, which showed a projected year-end surplus of \$173,798. He noted that figure reflects the Teamsters negotiations settlement. He pointed out the Health Benefits account is currently projected at \$101,840 over budget, mainly due to the Teamsters remaining on the PPO plan through the end of December, and an approximately \$83,000 expense increase in changes to employee health insurance coverage, mostly attributed to new hires. Mr. Hoff said the weather is currently the biggest variable on the budget. He noted that 7.5 FTE paraprofessionals have been hired to meet IEP requirements, which were not included in the budget. The Board will need to vote on a budget transfer from the Out-of-district Special Education Tuition account to the Special Education Services and Paraprofessional Special Education SMS accounts to fund these positions. Dr. Collin said the district will continue to manage complex cases of students with special needs, and provide quality programming as children are brought back into district. Board member D'Ostuni asked if these paraprofessionals were to support the students who came back into the district from outplacements or if they were from changes in IEPs. Dr. Collin said some are new students to the district with paraprofessional support in their IEP's, and some are students who were already in the district but have been identified post-budget as needing these supports. Students coming back into the district from outplacements were addressed with the Board in August. Board member Beiter asked if the approximately \$83,000 in increased health insurance expenses could be higher with other employees receiving health insurance. Mr. Hoff said the increase was related to hiring of new staff. Board member Porcello had questions on locking in heating prices and reimbursement rates for Choice students. Gas prices are not locked in, but the electricity rate is locked in through November. Superintendent Baldwin said she opened up enough seats to qualify for a 4% reimbursement rate, but with 90 students, the district qualifies for a 3% reimbursement rate. She noted that this is a volatile population and several students have moved.

MOTION #14-51: Roy moved to approve the transfer of \$177,000 from the Out-of-District Special Education Tuition Account to the Special Education Professional Services account and the Paraprofessionals Special Education SMS account. Schneider seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

- Food Service Operation Plan and Timetable

Dr. Baldwin said she and Mr. Hoff met with Aramark representatives to discuss the food service operations. This is important and timely work because it impacts the budget. The Board will be in negotiations with the food service union soon as their contract expires in June 2015. As the district transitions to Aramark, it is important that the district is well informed on the implementation of the program, the offerings, etc. Aramark has indicated it could implement the program with its own employees at a lower cost. The Board and the administration need to comprehensively review the operation and talk to all stakeholders, including current employees. Dr. Baldwin is impressed with Aramark's responsiveness and ability to draw upon the depth of their organization. She asked for Board member feedback on the proposed survey topics. Board member D'Ostuni said the quality of the food and the length of time for lunch should be included and separate questions in the survey to be consistent with the prior survey. Board member Beiter said the participation rate is the most comprehensive data to collect.

- Monitoring Report on Year 2 (2013-2014) and Year 3 Strategic Plan Implementation
Board Chair Sanborn said the Strategic Plan is the key document moving forward. Superintendent Baldwin said the strategic goals are the drivers for teaching and learning. This is an ongoing effort and some topics may be future agenda items. The indicators gauge how we are doing in attaining the goals. The only area that is in the progressing stage is the high leverage policy framework to support digital learning. All other areas are in the beginning to progressing stages. The work of the leadership team aligns with the strategic goals daily. Dr. Baldwin highlighted key areas in digital learning: strengthen resources and programming for parents, increase communication, align instructional shifts in supporting 21st century learning, examine resource allocation K-5, support teachers in this environment, and examine the IT department structure. Board member Gee said she would like to see monitoring in place to determine how teachers are doing with technology. Also the district needs to communicate to parents that technology integration is a continuum. Dr. Collin said it is important to remember it is a plan and not a destination. Board member Beiter was pleased with the technology gains the district has made, and he would like to see data supporting a correlation in the reduction of textbook. Dr. Baldwin said administration is reviewing print versus digital needs. Board member Sanborn asked for clarification on the difference between Google Apps and LMS. Ms. Osleger explained the LMS and Google Apps for Education applications.

Dr. Baldwin highlighted key areas in professional learning: improving professional climate, developing teacher leadership, using Professional Learning Committee meetings to get teacher feedback and give them a voice, gathering data on relevant learning opportunities teachers believe are important and necessary, supporting teachers in a standards-based learning environment, training paraprofessionals, and training secretaries on the district's programs and technology tools, and customer service. Board member Semyanko would like to see data on how the workshop model of instruction is working. Board member D'Ostuni noted since the strategic goal is not the avenue for teachers to discuss their career development if the evaluation time was when this occurred. Dr. Baldwin said the evaluation time can be an appropriate time but those discussions can occur in real time with their supervisors. Board member Schneider asked what the biggest challenge was going forward. Dr. Baldwin said the district has tremendous capacity but is challenged to provide real time support for teachers in this dynamic environment. Board member Gee expressed concern about the elimination of social/emotional programs at the middle school with the new schedule in place. Dr. Baldwin said the district is focusing PBIS K-12 and acknowledges the need to have those supports at the middle school level. Those supports are included in the budget process. Board member Beiter said the report is very thorough. He would like to see business settings for teachers. Dr. Baldwin said this is being addressed in student success planning, which she will discuss in Goal 4.

Dr. Baldwin highlighted key areas in the use of data: implementing the standards-based reporting tool and data around that work, working with the reading infrastructure and Star Math, and using Inform to collect and analyze data. Board member Semyanko asked for clarification on the "I can" statements. Superintendent Baldwin explained the standards are aligned with ELA, and the district is looking at all standards and shaping them into "I can" statements for students. Board members asked if there was data on these standards. Dr. Baldwin said there is benchmark data K-5. The K-12 benchmark assessment infrastructure is

in place. The Inform application, a data warehouse, is connected to PowerSchool, allowing the collecting and tracking of data. Board member Gee said she would like to see more information to better understand how that data informs the Board's work. Board member Beiter said the information was thorough and comprehensive. Board member Porcello noted the alignment and logical progression of the Strategic Plan.

Dr. Baldwin highlighted key areas in curriculum that embeds 21st century skills and is aligned with CCSS: strengthen work 6-12 to personalize curriculum for students through student success plans, strengthen world language, focus on unified arts experiences 6-12, and analyze assessment evidence to increase 21st century skills across all content areas. The transition to the new standards in curriculum work is fluid and dynamic. Board member D'Ostuni commented on all four goals stating the goal items are about implementation with the need for data to determine if the steps are leading to improvement. This information will help to inform the Town and Board of Finance of district improvement to help with receiving needed resources from the Town. The Board needs measurable targets. She requested the administration report to the Board benchmarks and targets in these four areas as a next level of work. Board members Gee and Semyanko agreed. Board member Sanborn said this document allows the Board to determine where to go from here and what the Board needs to see next. The Strategic Plan will have impacts on the budget, policies and curriculum.

Superintendent's Report

- 2015-2016 Budget Development – Dr. Baldwin said administration has begun development for the 2015-16 budget. The process has started a month earlier than last year and administration has developed an internal calendar. She and Mr. Hoff will meet with budget subcommittee co-chairs Schneider and Porcello this week to review the process, discuss expectations, timelines, and any concerns. The communication from the Town on the Tri-board meeting is either December 8 or 15 but it has not been confirmed. Board member Roy said the Board of Finance minutes state the meeting would be on December 15. Dr. Baldwin said she will confirm the date and relay the information to Board members. She said her budget presentation to the Board is tentatively scheduled for February 3, 2015. At the November 17 cabinet meeting, building principals will attend to present their building budgets. Board member Sanborn asked that Superintendent Baldwin send the budget calendar to Board members.
- Open House Report – Dr. Baldwin said she requested feedback from principals on their open houses. They reported there was a strong presence from SFES and the PTO. Feedback from parents was strong around the sharing of curriculum. Overall the open houses were well attended and very positive.

Chair's Report

Board Chair Sanborn said the Board met in executive session prior to the regular session to continue their self-evaluation work. They have drafted 4 goals. Board members also received a copy of the new subcommittee list. She asked Board member Roy if she would once again be the CAFE liaison. Board member Roy accepted and said she will be attending the delegate assembly the day before the convention. She asked for Board members to give her input on how to vote at the assembly.

Subcommittee Reports

Board member Gee attended the CREC meeting which focused on the election for governor, and the selection of a new Commissioner of Education. CREC Members brainstormed qualities they thought were important in a Commissioner of Education. Board member Gee stated the main concerns were a sense of disrespect of local Boards of Education responsibilities and the government impacting local Boards' ability to act in the best interest of their constituents. She also asked for Board members' opinions on CREC Executive Director Bruce Douglas relative to his desire to continue as an Interim Executive Director after his resignation is effective. Board member Sanborn said Mr. Douglas has done a phenomenal job for CREC and he would be difficult to replace.

Board member Sanborn said the Policy subcommittee met on October 8. There are several policies on a 30 day read as a result of that meeting.

Future Business

- Material Selection and Curriculum Audit – *Nov./Dec. 2014*
- 2014 Comprehensive School Climate Inventory – Survey Results – *Oct./Nov. 2014*
- Curriculum Writing Process and Engagement of Teachers – *Nov./Dec. 2014*
- Policy Process – Curriculum Review and Adoption – *Nov./Dec. 2014*
- Appeals Process for Material Selection in Classrooms – *Nov./Dec. 2014*
- Superintendent Performance Evaluation – *Nov. 2014*
- Middle School Schedule Update – *Dec./Jan.*
- Update of 1:1 digital environment at SHS
- List of Monitoring Reports
- Report on Summer Reading Program
- Report on Staffing and Retention
- A presentation of the Superintendent's choice with rationale for the district administration structure with two alternative structures from high performing districts.
- Curriculum for approval
- Update on LAF/School Construction close-out process
- Standards-Based Report Tool presentation
- Measurable data of the 4 Strategic Plan Goals

Public Comment

None

Adjournment

Beiter moved, D'Ostuni seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:47 p.m.

Minutes are subject to approval at the next meeting on November 4, 2014

Respectfully submitted,

Lori D'Ostuni
Secretary

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