

Board of Education Meeting
November 5, 2014

Call to Order

Board Chair Sanborn called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. in the Suffield High School Media Center. Present: Board members Lori D'Ostuni, Natalie Semyanko, Mary Roy, Jeanne Gee, Mary Lou Sanborn, George Beiter, Superintendent, Karen Baldwin, Assistant Superintendent, Jim Collin and Business Manager, Bill Hoff.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance

Communications

Superintendent Baldwin received notification that the Suffield FFA Family, Friends & Alumni Group donated \$1300.00 to the Agri-Science program. Enclosed in Board members' packets is a copy of the letter sent to the Co-chairs of the organization in acknowledgement and recognition of their donation as well as the form as required by Board Policy #3280.

Board Chair Sanborn said Board members received a communication from Kris Karam in her support for the district's curriculum supervisor structure. Board member Gee stated Ms. Karam sent another communication to Board members earlier today. It was noted the second communication from Kris Karam had several questions related to her first communication. That communication was provided to the Board Chair from the Superintendent.

Approval of Minutes

Semyanko moved, Beiter seconded to approve the minutes of the October 21, 2014 Board meeting. All members voted in favor. The motion carried.

Discussion/Action Items

• PBIS Status Update

Dr. Baldwin introduced the Spaulding PBIS team: Scott Dunn, Cali McGinn, Bari DeMichele, Megan Blais and Kris Pryce. Mr. Dunn said PBIS is a framework that gives a cohesive, consistent foundation and engages all stakeholders. They have been asked to present at the State PBIS conference about their model as well as possibly at the national level. Everyone is involved and has embraced the PBIS model, which is part of the culture and climate at Spaulding. The program's structure includes the leadership team, the PBIS team, Spaulding staff and the community. The focus this year is grounding parents and families in this framework and how they can partner at home. Ms. McGinn was impressed at the framework that was already in place when she started in her position this year. She gave specific examples of items on which they are working. She explained the implementation timeline: setting expectations, giving lessons, and implementing a school wide reinforcement system. The next steps are to create a classroom matrix, which is currently being piloted. The expectation matrix gives the expected behaviors of respect, responsibility and kindness for students in various locations at Spaulding. Ms. Blais gave examples of expected behaviors using different visual forms/prompts. Ms. DeMichele, School Psychologist, spoke of the consistent reinforcement systems she uses when working with her students which support the classroom reinforcement systems. She stated that the social behaviors being taught to all students were previously only taught in special education settings. Ms. Pryce highlighted the professional development opportunities for all staff. Cynthia Zingler from

CREC, is a PBIS and CERTS trainer who has conducted training session with Pre-K to 5 staff members. The district held PBIS training session last spring and a follow-up session this past summer. Another session was held last week. McAlister aligned their tenets with Spaulding's as a result of those professional development sessions. Mr. Pearce, Suffield Middle School Principal, attended last week's session and Mr. Moccio, Suffield High School Principal, shared work he had done in PBIS at his previous district. The professional development involved PBIS training for both certified and non-certified staff. The PBIS team meets once a month with non-certified staff. Board member D'Ostuni asked what measurements have been established to determine the effectiveness of the program. Mr. Dunn said a variety of data instruments are used, including surveys to certified staff, non-certified staff and parents, as well as office referral data. The office referral database includes information on behaviors, setting, age, details of the situation, and consequences given. Board member D'Ostuni asked that a report of those measurements be given in the future. Mr. Dunn said Phase II and III will include measurement reports. Board member D'Ostuni asked about the communication plan to parents about the PBIS program. Mr. Dunn said the PBIS program was communicated to parents at the Meet and Greet over the summer, at Open House in September, and will be communicated at Spaulding's Show and Tell tomorrow night. Information is also communicated in Ms. DeMichele's newsletters. Superintendent Baldwin thanked the team for their presentation and their good work.

- Presentation of K-5 data from the 2014 National School Climate Inventory
Mr. Dunn and Ms. Carpenter-Snow presented the data from the 2014 National School Climate Inventory. Mr. Dunn said school climate refers to the quality of school life as experienced by members of the school community which includes the students, the staff, and the parents. He highlighted the four school climate research findings: individual experience, risk prevention and health promotion, academic achievement and teacher retention. The comprehensive school climate inventory includes safety, teaching and learning, relationships, and environment. Mr. Dunn said Spaulding and McAlister are focusing on safety rules and norms, social-emotional safety, and social and civic learning. Ms. Carpenter-Snow spoke about the benefits of assessment, allocating resources, and use common language among staff. The theory of action drives student learning and is part of SRBI and touches on our Professional Learning Communities. She highlighted the strategies and structures of the theory of action. Mr. Dunn explained the intervention tiers. Mr. Dunn reviewed the climate goal. Mr. Dunn and Ms. Carpenter-Snow highlighted the survey responses from their respective schools. Parents, teachers and students (McAlister only) were surveyed. The surveys compared data from the fall of 2012 and the spring of 2014. Board members were concerned with the low numbers in the surveys and the low participation rates. Mr. Dunn and Ms. Carpenter-Snow talked about strategies moving forward including conversations with teacher team leaders and parents, and conducting more targeted, specific surveys. Board member D'Ostuni said additional surveys will not be helpful if parent engagement is low. The survey response rates K-12 are low and parents need to be invited into schools and feel welcomed. She suggested finding out why parents are disengaged, giving the example of focus groups. Mr. Dunn said the K-5 school climate plan is aligned with the district's school climate plan. Ms. Carpenter-Snow highlighted how data is collected to evaluate the program. Dr. Baldwin thanked Mr. Dunn and Ms. Carpenter-Snow for their presentation.

- **10-Year Capital Improvement Plan**
Dr. Baldwin said the district's 10-year capital improvement plan is provided to the Board annually. She added a Facilities subcommittee meeting will be scheduled to prioritize projects for 2015-2016. Mr. Hoff reviewed the projects that were identified and noted the projects on the spreadsheet were broken out by school and by year. Mr. Hoff highlighted the oil tanks removal project which is a new project this year. The removal of the tanks is required by the State. Some items that were not funded this year moved to the next year, he said. Board member Gee expressed concern over the information that was presented since this was the first time the Board had seen this information. She also expressed concern over the projection of expenditures at the middle school in 2017-2018 and presenting that figure to ACCE. Mr. Plano said this is the same document that was presented last year to the Board and to ACCE. Mr. Plano added the document was created at the request of ACCE wanting to see the needs of the district over a 10-year period. Board member Gee stated she was all for transparency but expressed concern the Board does not have an understanding of what the numbers mean when someone in the community asks about the numbers. She would like to see the projects broken out by "must haves" and "would like to have". Dr. Baldwin said the subcommittee will identify the items that are priorities and bring it back to the Board.

Report on Teacher Retention 2012-2014

Dr. Baldwin presented the data on teacher attrition (leaving the profession) and migration (moving to another district) data. The report compared Suffield's demographic data to the U.S. demographic data of 2005 and 2011. Overall there is a great deal of attrition and migration happening nationwide. The district's focus is to continue to strengthen the role of human resources. The report also included a comparison of turnover data from other area districts to Suffield's. A breakdown of the Suffield data showing attrition and migration information over three years showed a little more than 25% was due to non-renewals, which demonstrates the district's work in supervision and evaluation. The non-renewal category can potentially skew the overall retention and migration rates. Board member Gee would like to see data going back to 2009. She stated concern over the large number of "unknown" reasons for leaving the district. She noted exit interviews should be done and would be helpful. Dr. Baldwin reviewed the results of the pulse survey given in September 2014 to get feedback on how the opening of school went. She also discussed the results with the Professional Learning Committee. The feedback has been very positive to the start of the school year. The district is getting teacher feedback and being responsive to that feedback. 75% of respondents felt that the district and school-based administrators are aligned to improve the professional climate. Board member Gee noted the dissatisfaction with curriculum roll out was at 30%. Dr. Collin said the writing curriculum to standards that have not yet been assessed has been a challenge. This is an ongoing process and it is more transparent but issues remain around resources and gather materials as the curriculum is being written. Dr. Baldwin said the administration changed how we rolled out curriculum this summer as a result of the SEA survey. The administration is trying to be responsive and have real time conversations with teachers. Board members asked for specifics on the low response rate around the new teacher orientation session at the district level. Dr. Baldwin said to some extent it was a question design model, but most of the respondents are willing to meet with human resources and discuss their concerns. The administration will follow up with them to get more specific feedback and design a program more tailored to their needs.

Board member Beiter left at 8:35 and returned 8:37.

Board member D'Ostuni asked if there was a systematic way at looking at teachers' needs in the district, noting the evaluation system is about the district's needs but it is not clear where conversations about our staff's career aspirations are occurring, which lead to retention. She also wondered how the district works with them on those needs. Superintendent Baldwin said she is reviewing the human resources role in order to relieve the HR assistant of mechanical duties associated with payroll and business operations to strengthen her efforts to help with retention and hiring.

Approval of the TA between the Suffield Board of Education and the Teamsters Union, Local 671

Board Chair Sanborn said Item 7E under Discussion/Action Items needs to be tabled because the Union requested more time to build understanding of the new agreement among its members. D'Ostuni moved to table this item, Beiter seconded the motion. All members voted in favor to table Item 7E. The motion carried.

Superintendent's Report

- Paraeducator of the Year and Teacher of the Year Ceremonies – Dr. Baldwin said the Paraeducator of the Year ceremony will take place on November 6, 2014 and the Teacher of the Year ceremony will take place on December 2, 2014. Dr. Baldwin will also be participating in the Suffield Middle School talent show on Thursday, November 5.

Lori D'Ostuni left at 8:40 p.m.

Chair's Report

Board Chair Sanborn said the Board met in executive session on November 3, 2014 to continue their work on the Board's self-evaluation process. The Board is still working on their goals and they are also looking at the structure of their subcommittees.

Subcommittee Reports

Board Chair Sanborn said the Policy subcommittee met on November 5. The following policies are being put on the Board's November 18 agenda as 30 day reads: Policy #5131.911 – Bullying Prevention and Intervention/Safe School Climate Policy to add legislative changes around teen dating violence; Policy #4115.4 – Concussion Training for Athletic Coaches & Certified Physical Educators in response to legislative changes; and Policy #5141.21 – Administration of Student Medications also in response to legislative changes. The subcommittee also reviewed the policy on Participation in Athletics/Extracurricular Activities. Members had questions around this policy so it will be placed on the December Policy subcommittee meeting agenda. The subcommittee reviewed and discussed policies regarding the provision/selection of textbooks and instructional material and requests for consideration of instructional materials. It was determined that the full Board needs to discuss the philosophy and goals of the district and the policy on evaluation and selection of books and instructional material.

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
- Review of Kelly Services
- Safe School Climate Plan Approval
- Discussion of philosophy and goals of the district and the policy on evaluation and selection of books and instructional material

Public Comment

Kendra Wiesel, 37 Willow Creek Ave, said she has two children in Kindergarten and the roll out to parents around the PBIS model has been very clear and been done in several ways. She is seeing it at home with her children and she is using it at home as well. She wanted to reassure Board member D’Ostuni that parent disengagement is occurring at all levels. As part of the PTO and SPED-PAC committees, parent engagement is a challenge. The principals at Spaulding and McAlister have been very welcoming to parents, and they have done a great job in creating warm and welcoming schools. There are great opportunities for parents to meet with principals. She noted engagement is not only a problem in the school system but in the community in general. Ms. Wiesel was happy to see the data on teacher retention. From a parent’s perspective it highlights for her that Suffield is not that different from other districts and the data has been fairly consistent over the years. She is not interested in looking further back at data but to looking forward. A structure should be put in place to standardize the data and collect it consistently to compare from year to year. From what she has heard it sounds like there is a deficit in the human resources department.

Adjournment

Roy moved, Beiter seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:52 p.m.

Minutes are subject to approval at the next meeting on November 18, 2014

Respectfully submitted,

Lori D’Ostuni
Secretary