

Board of Education Meeting
December 1, 2015

Executive Session

Service moved, Beiter seconded to go into executive session at 5:43 p.m. for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter: Teamsters union grievance.

Beiter moved, Service seconded to come out of executive session at 6:18 p.m.

Executive Session

Service moved, Beiter seconded to go into executive session at 6:20 p.m. for the purpose of discussing a student matter.

Beiter moved, Service seconded to come out of executive session at 6:47 p.m.

Call to Order

Board Chair Gee called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Suffield High School Media Center. Present: Board members Lori D'Ostuni, Natalie Semyanko, Jeanne Gee, Kendra Wiesel, Matt Service, George Beiter, Susi Keane, Superintendent Karen Berasi, Assistant Superintendent Brian Hendrickson and Business Manager Bill Hoff.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Recognition

CAPSS Student Award Recipients – Mr. Pearce introduced 8th grader, Paige Anderson, this year's Suffield Middle School recipient. Mr. Moccio introduced 12th grader, Deana Pileika, this year's Suffield High School recipient. Both principals highlighted why these two students were chosen for this award.

Carl Casinghino introduced the SHS media students who were in attendance: Michelle Pine, Bradley Grimard, Corey Trase, and Matteo Casinghino. Mr. Casinghino shared information relative to an article he wrote that was published in the *Journal of Media Literacy*. He shared the work of the students in the media class and specifically projects being done in the new television studio. Board Chair Gee commended Mr. Casinghino on his article and thanked the students for attending. Superintendent Berasi said this is what education is all about: exemplary teachers who motivate students and enable them to take risks. Board member D'Ostuni connected the skills the students are developing in this course to the ones in a recent edu-documentary, "Most Likely to Succeed" – communication, creativity, persistence, collaboration, as well as customer-focused.

Public Comment

Johnathan Metcalf, 39 Cedar Crest Lane, noted his concerns on the visits to school policy that is on the agenda for approval this evening.

Sue Davis, 42 Wisteria Lane, asked the Board to review the visits to school policy, specifically regarding the limitations on parents to observe in classrooms. She gave an example of an

observation she attended. She lacks trust in the system but would like to rebuild that trust through unrestrictive observations.

Idrees Faridi, 179 South Stone Street, reflected on parents' comments at tonight's and previous meetings. He stressed the importance of parent engagement and working collaboratively.

Mary Robles, 795 Copper Hill Road, said she is frustrated that her public comments made at the last Board meeting were not properly reflected in the minutes.

Approval of Minutes

D'Ostuni moved to approve the November 17, 2015 minutes. Beiter seconded the motion and all members voted in favor. The motion carried.

Consent Agenda

MOTION #15-73: Semyanko moved to pull Policy #1250 – Visits to Schools – off of the consent agenda.

MOTION #15-74: Semyanko moved, Keane seconded to approve the following items on the consent agenda: Policy/Regulation #5145.12 – Search and Seizure; Policy #5145.121 – Vehicle Searches; and Policy #5145.122 – Use of Dogs. All members voted in favor. The motion carried.

Discussion Items

- Special Services Update

Ms. Nancy Taylor gave an update to the Board on Special Education in the district. She stated the district is building a culture of common beliefs and values. Data was shared on the number of students with special needs by disability and by grade, a comparison of special education students who are outplaced and those who are in magnet schools, test results for special education students taking the Smarter Balanced test data for ELA and Math and CMT/CAPT test data for science. She reviewed what the district has been working on relative to professional development to build capacity of teachers, administrators and paraprofessionals. Board members had questions around embedded professional development. Ms. Taylor shared the issues and concerns in special education in the district. Board member D'Ostuni suggested four specific questions that should be answered for the next update to the Board, which would determine the effectiveness of the district's special education programming. Superintendent Berasi reminded Board members that this is baseline data. Board Chair Gee thanked Ms. Taylor for her presentation.

- 2016-2017 School Calendar

Board Chair Gee reviewed the two draft versions of the 2016-2017 school calendar. Board members discussed holding school on Veteran's Day and Columbus Day and the date of the first day of school.

MOTION #15-75: Beiter moved to accept the 2016-2017 school calendar with a start date of August 31, 2016 with one modification that Veteran's Day be a school day. Wiesel seconded the motion and all members voted in favor. The motion carried.

- Policy #1250 – Visits to Schools

Board Chair Gee explained the use of consent agendas. She said she asked a Board member to remove the policy from the consent agenda because it has been controversial and removing

it allowed for board discussion. Board members discussed the changes to the policy and the purpose for the changes. In response to Board member Wiesel's question, Superintendent Berasi said the changes to the observation policy was prompted by teachers and administrators who stated observations were disruptive to the educational process. Instituting the policy and procedure will balance accommodating parents' requests to observe in the classroom and allow teachers and administrators the ability to do their jobs effectively. **MOTION #15-76:** Service moved to send Policy #1250 back to subcommittee for the purpose of separating out items 2, 3, and 4 to a separate observation policy. Wiesel seconded the motion and all members voted in favor. The motion carried.

Action Items

- Teamsters Union Grievance
MOTION #15-77: Keane moved to deny the grievance, Semyanko seconded. All members voted in favor except Beiter, who abstained. The motion carried 6-0.
- Student Matter
MOTION #15-78: D'Ostuni moved to table this item until the Board receives alternate documentation and convene a special meeting once received. Semyanko seconded the motion and all members voted in favor. The motion carried.

Reports to the Board

Superintendent's Report

- Superintendent Berasi said she, Mr. Hendrickson, Mr. Pearce, Mr. Moccio and Ms. Carpenter-Snow attended a conference the last two days on district coherence and school improvement. She also said the CABE/CAPSS convention was excellent.

Chair's Report

- Board Chair Gee said subcommittee assignments should be set at the next meeting. She will discuss this with the Superintendent on Thursday and poll Board members for their choices.

Business Manager's Report

- Mr. Hoff reported that the district has reached a contract agreement with Aramark. The district will be responsible for the first \$25,000 in losses, Aramark will be responsible for the next \$50,000 in losses, and if there is a loss of over \$75,000, the district will be responsible for subsidizing that loss.

Subcommittee Reports

- Communications: Board Chair Gee said she received correspondence from a candidate running for President and offered the information to any Board member who was interested.
- Board member D'Ostuni stated the Policy subcommittee will meet on December 2 at 7:00 a.m.

Future Business

Board member Beiter said the Board should determine a different location for Board meetings, preferably the middle school. He also asked that the Board start videotaping the meetings. Board members agreed.

Adjournment

Beiter moved, Service seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:44 p.m.

Minutes are subject to approval at the next meeting on December 15, 2015.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori D'Ostuni
Secretary

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