



Columbia Board of Education
Regular Meeting Minutes
May 2, 2011
7:30 P.M.

Horace W. Porter School Library Media Center

Board Members Present: Paula Belekewicz, Lisa Jurovaty-Vice Chairman, William Mulcahy, Lauren Perrotti-Verboven-Chairman, Nelson Petrone, John Schroder, James Thorn

Administration Present: Francine Coss-Superintendent

Staff Present: Marian Lowry, Janet Stice, Sandra Rijs

Citizens Present: No citizens were in attendance

I. Call to Order

Lauren Perrotti-Verboven called the May 2, 2011 regular meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Celebration of Excellence

Mrs. Perotti-Verboven congratulated the students for their contributions of poems which appeared in the "Saturday Special" section of the Willimantic Chronicle. Mrs. Rijs was commended for her part in helping the students' works be published.

IV. Approval of April 4, 2011 Regular Board of Education Minutes - Take Action

J. Thorn **MOVED** and J. Schroder **SECONDED** to approve the April 4, 2011 regular meeting minutes as presented.
MOTION CARRIES: 7-0

V. Comments from the Audience (Bylaws of the Board #9300)

Time allotted for public participation—30 minutes, time allotted for an individual speaker—3 minutes

VI. Correspondence/Communications/Information

A. April 1, 2011 Horace W. Porter School Enrollment

B. Superintendent Coss to Horace W. Porter School Parents – Updated 2011/2012 Calendar

Members asked for clarification of the reasoning behind moving to 3 trimesters instead of 4 marking periods in the middle school. *Mrs. Coss explained the additional time between marking periods would assist in scheduling longer rotation time for classes and would also allow students more time to show progress. Mrs. Perotti-Verboven asked that the calendar contain a brief description of the district wide assessments. She is pleased they are noted on the calendar but would like further information included so parents understand the assessments are not exams students are expected to study for.*

C. District Results from the Fall 2010 Kindergarten Inventory – April 8, 2011

Mrs. Coss mentioned the Kindergarten teachers are anxious to compare the results of the Fall 2010 Kindergarten Inventory with a Spring Inventory to compare growth. The Fall Inventory was completed when students first arrived at Porter.

D. Tuition Payment for Part-time Interdistrict Magnet Programs – April 10, 2011

E. 2010 Public School Racial Statistics – April 11, 2011

F. Superintendent Coss to Columbia Parents – Updated Policy 5117 – School Attendance Designated High Schools

Mrs. Coss has reassured parents that current Lyman High School students will be allowed to graduate with their class even though a severance agreement has been reached for 2012. Mrs. Perotti-Verboven asked if many students are transferring to E.O. Smith and if there continue to be openings for Columbia students. Mrs. Coss responded so far there has been room for all students, however, the 10th grade is getting thick. She is checking to be sure a recent transfer request can be honored for a 10th grade student. One child is transferring to Windham High School as well. Mrs. Perotti-Verboven asked Board members to re-direct parents with questions concerning high school transfers to the Superintendent's Office. She noted it is a very complex situation.

G. The 2011 Student Philosopher – Windham High School

Mrs. Coss said there are 6 Columbia students who contributed to the Philosopher. These students, as well as the students whose work appeared in the Saturday Special will be sent congratulatory letters from the Board of Education.

VI. Financial Review

A. Payment of Bills

B. Actual & Budgeted Expenses and Encumbrances

Mr. Thorn asked Mrs. Stice how purchases are made for the musical productions at Porter. Mrs. Stice said she uses a personal credit card for companies who do not allow purchases by purchase orders. The card is only used for school purchases and this system works well for her.

VI. B. Actual & Budgeted Expenses and Encumbrances - continued

Mrs. Coss reported the certified salary budget line item 111 should be in the positive at the end of the fiscal year due to a teacher leaving in January and a reduced cost for an administrative position. Non Certified salaries should also show a plus since a staff member left in October.

Mrs. Perotti-Verboven urged Board members to continue to spread the word regarding the upcoming budget vote. She said the Board of Education holds money to the end of the year, as do most businesses. It is considered prudent practice since you can't fall short for salaries or benefits. She also noted this has been our steadiest year concerning finance and many prior errors have been corrected. She would like to remind the Town that the Board of Education has held up its end of the "gentlemen's agreement" by returning approximately \$200,000 to the Town for several years.

She wants to ensure the budget presentation is an extremely clear budget and description since it will be the first time many voters will be seeing the budget.

Mrs. Perotti-Verboven will not be able to attend the meeting scheduled for May 10th and has asked Mrs. Jurovaty to speak on her behalf.

VIII. Reports

A. Board of Education Chairperson

1. May Through August 2011 Columbia Board of Education Meeting Dates
2. 2011 Columbia Board of Education Committee Membership

B. Board of Education Subcommittees

1. May 9, 2011 – Policy/Facilities/Curriculum Subcommittee Meetings @ 6:00 p.m. Porter LMC
2. May 10, 2011 – Annual Town Budget Meeting @ 7:30 p.m. H.W.P. Cafeteria
3. May 11, 2011 – Fiscal Policy Board Meeting @ 8:30 a.m. H.W.P. Conference Room
4. May 16, 2011 – Budget/Negotiations Subcommittee Meetings @ 6:00 p.m. Porter LMC

C. Superintendent's Report

1. Columbia Student Residency Questionnaire
Mrs. Coss said a student whose family could not prove residency was recently asked to leave the system. Mrs. Jurovaty asked when the Residency Questionnaire would be used. Mrs. Coss said a letter is first sent to parents if it is believed they are not residing in Town. The questionnaire would follow the letter.
2. Horace W. Porter School K-8 Tech Guide - *Mrs. Perotti-Verboven thanked Mrs. Lowry for all her hard work.*
3. Administrative Update – April 26, 2011
Mrs. Coss said there have been 116 logins to the Parent Portal. Board members suggested additional directions to access Parent Portal be provided to parents. Directions could be provided in the Student Handbook and on the Porter Website. Mr. Petrone suggested someone be available on Open House night to assist parents.
4. High School Transfers
5. Hot Lunch Site Reimbursement Claim
6. Eastconn Contract for IT Services/Technical Support
7. Powerschool Training
Mrs. Coss is investigating staff training options including in-house training vs. training at an outside facility and the cost implications of each. Mr. Petrone suggested looking into hosting training for area schools at Porter since several districts use Power School.
8. Connecticut Legislature Education-Related Bills
Mrs. Coss described a few of the proposed changes which include consideration of a change in requirements reducing the requirement that substitute teachers hold a bachelors degree. Also under consideration is a change in the age of school entrance to be 5 years by October of their Kindergarten year which could result in children in Kindergarten reaching 7 years old. High school drop out age is also being reconsidered to change from 16 to 17 years old and possibly 18 in the future.
9. 5-Year Technology Planning – 2010/11, 2011/12, 2012/13, 2013/14, 2014/15

IX. Discussion

A. Policy 1110.0 Media of Communication/Parent Involvement-Parent Portal Acceptable Use and Safety Policy – First Reading

Members agreed the policy is straight forward. They confirmed it follows guidelines set forth by CABE. Members suggested social networking be addressed with all staff prior to the start of the school year during professional development.

B. Policy 4118.51 Rights, Responsibilities and Duties/Acceptable Computer Network Use (Employee Use of Technology) Social Networking Websites – First Reading

C. Policy 5141.31 Health Examinations for Middle School Athletic Participation – First Reading

P. Belekewicz **MOVED**, J. Schroder **SECONDED** to add the IX. Policy Discussion items A through C. as action items.
MOTION CARRIES 7:0

Ms. Verboven-Perotti noted coaches will be provided with a handbook which includes a code of conduct.

X. Action Items

- A. Policy 1110.0 Media of Communication/Parent Involvement-Parent Portal Acceptable Use and Safety Policy – First Reading**
- B. Policy 4118.51 Rights, Responsibilities and Duties/Acceptable Computer Network Use (Employee Use of Technology) Social Networking Websites – First Reading**
- C. Policy 5141.31 Health Examinations for Middle School Athletic Participation – First Reading**

- D. Policy 3542 Food Service-School Lunch Service – Second Reading**
- E. Policy 3542.43 Food Service-Charging Policy – Second Reading**

N. Petrone **MOVED**, P. Belekewicz **SECONDED** to approve the policies as submitted.
MOTION CARRIES 7:0

XI. Future Agenda Items

- Parent Portal
- Athletic Policies
- Prioritized list of accounting expenditures through the end of the fiscal year

XII. Board of Education Member Comments

Updates to the Porter web site were requested including athletic schedules.

XIII. Adjournment

J. Thorn **MOVED**, J. Schroder **SECONDED** to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m.
MOTION CARRIES 7:0

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Jurovaty
Columbia Board of Education Vice-Chairperson