



Columbia Board of Education Regular Meeting Minutes May 6, 2013

7:30 P.M.

Horace W. Porter School Cafeteria

Board Members Present: Kerry Hoffman, Sondra Montesi, Lisa Napolitano, Lauren Perrotti-Verboven-Chairman, John Schroder, James Thorn-Vice Chairman, Kathy Tolsdorf

Administration Present: Francine Coss-Superintendent, Alyssa Gwinnell-Principal

Citizens Present: Chris DelMastro, Maria Gratton, Anthony White, Ann Shutler, Joe Pardee, Bill Lageman

Call to Order

Lauren Perrotti-Verboven called the May 6, 2013, regular meeting to order at 7:40 p.m.

Additions to Agenda:

L. Perrotti-Verboven **MOVED** and J. Schroder **SECONDED** to amend the agenda and add:

- Discussion of Payment of Bills
- Discussion of Co-Curricular/Stipend Positions
- Approval of Healthy Food Certification
- Appointment of Assistant Principal

Removal of Items from the Agenda:

- VI. Discussion Concerning the Contract of the Superintendent
- VII. Executive Session for the Purpose of Possible Action Concerning the Superintendent's Contract of Employment

MOTION CARRIES: 7-0

I. Pledge of Allegiance

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

Time allotted for public participation is thirty (30) minutes; time allotted for an individual speaker is three (3) minutes.

Joe Pardee's son asked his coach what he could do better and he did what the coach suggested. This year he is playing more. Last year he played less than 12 innings. This year at this point he has already played that much. But he is concerned about how the baseball team is being run. Because his son did not have a certain shirt he had to run. A junior level program should develop all students. There is such a large number of boys on the team that having an assistant coach would help and develop a positive nature of the sport.

Chris DelMastro asked if there is a school mandate stating that students will not be cut from sports teams? He feels there are too many kids on the field. This is not fair to the coach or students. Other teams seem to be better prepared than Porter's team. He is concerned that our kids need to get more hits. Our feels our kids are not prepared to go into games.

Ann Shutler's son also plays on this team. She is looking at the overall experience and not just to winning games. Her son is there for the character building experience. His coach asked him what his mom does for him that he can do for himself. Her son replied that his mom makes his bed every day. Her son wrote up a contract with adult legal jargon that both he and his coach signed. Her son has made his bed every day since he signed the contract. Mrs. Shutler wants her son to leave the field with strong character rather than a strong back. You've got to earn your opportunities. Things get a little blurry when you look at the losses and the wins. She is thankful for Coach White.

Maria Gratton's son is learning that hard work on the field equals success. There are no politics on the team. Mr. White speaks to the entire team like they are men. She suggests getting an assistant coach who is not a parent and having an A team and B team. She was appalled when she received that email.

Bill Lageman began to speak but an audience member interrupted him to say that he could not speak at this meeting because he resides in Hebron. He was asked to put his opinion in a letter to the Board of Education.

- **Discussion of Co-Curricular/Stipend Positions**

The Board discussed background checks, creating job descriptions for these positions, team assistants, plans for managing large teams and informing staff that requirements may change for co-curricular/stipend positions. Mrs. Coss will have job descriptions for the June 3, 2013 Board of Education meeting.

III. **Presentation**

- **District/School Safety and Security Update**

Francine Coss-Superintendent and Alyssa Gwinnell-H.W. Porter School Principal

Connecticut Law: PA 11-232 stresses the importance of a safe school climate, promotes anti-bullying, gives intervention strategies, improves efforts to improve school climate through a:

- Safe School Climate Committee
- Safe School Climate Specialist (school-level) who implements the plan within the school and addresses bullying prevention and intervention.
- Safe School Climate Coordinator (district-level) who acts as a liaison between the State Department of Education and the Safe School Climate Specialist and develops the Safe School Climate Plan.
- Safe School Climate Plan including expanded definition of bullying and guidelines for bullying reporting and investigating.
- Biennial survey of students, parents and staff to determine the shortcomings in school climate perception of student safety, bullying and school climate. This drives the action steps within the safe school climate plan.

Mrs. Gwinnell reviewed the *Safe School Climate Committee* that is made up of nine staff members, one parent and one parent/Board of Education member. The Committee oversees the quality and character of school life, focuses on the relationships within the school community between and among students and adults, and supports people to feel socially, emotionally and physically safe. The committee and Safe School Climate Plan reduces achievement inequalities, supports positive youth development, promotes effective youth risk prevention, increases teacher retention and prepares students for success in school and life.

The Principal Advisory Committee consists of students who represent the student body. They meet with the Principal to discuss student issues and concerns. This committee shares the results of these discussions and meetings with their peers. They have reviewed the student dress code policy and the need for students to take proper care of the new middle school lockers.

Other efforts to expand awareness, increase communication and safe school climate include Porter Pride Assemblies, Pep Rallies, cameras which have been installed on all buses and faculty who are stationed at specific hallway locations to oversee student behavior during the start and dismissal times of each school day.

Mrs. Perrotti-Verboven would like to catch bullying as it takes place. She would like hallways, locker rooms, buses, lunchroom and lavatories to be monitored to limit the opportunity for bullying and asks that the administration come down hard on students.

The **Safety Committee** consists of the Resident State Trooper, Director of Transportation, Town Administrator, Director of Public Works, Columbia Fire Chief, Superintendent, Principal*, Director of Student Services, Facilities Manager*, Head Facilities Technician*, Director of Food Services* and School Secretary*. Core group members* meet after each fire drill, lockdown, evacuation, and AED drill. The full group meets each September, January, March and June.

The Safety Committee has reviewed/updated protocols, added a "Stay Put" protocol, reviewed campus security concerns and established procedures for locking down parts of the school after school depending on the location of the activity. During April vacation, Trooper Aiken hosted a tour of the building for state police who might need to respond to HWP in the event of an emergency situation. All doors in the buildings are locked at all times and the front doors are monitored from 7:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. each day.

Mrs. Perrotti-Verboven said security is the number one priority for the Board at this time. She likes everything Mrs. Gwinnell has done but more needs to be done. She would like a Security Committee formed that will meet each month when the Budget Subcommittee meets. She would like a security audit performed by an outside private professional. Quotes for new security doors need to be stepped up. We can do more to keep our kids safe.

IV. Financial Review

- 2012-2013 Payment of Bills – Board members reviewed the bills listings and Superintendent Coss provided answers to their questions.
- Columbia School Expenditure Report for Fiscal Year 2012-2013 as of 05/02/13
- Columbia School Grant Status Actual & Budgeted Expenses as of 04/30/13
- Vendor and Employee Contract Review - Board members reviewed the contracts of vendors and employees. Mrs. Coss answered the Board's questions.
- Columbia Minimum Budget Requirement – The Board discussed the State Board of Education meeting and the Town and Board of Education's difference of interpretation of the matter. The State requested that the Town keep the BOE abreast of any information pertaining to this matter. Mrs. Coss thanked Mrs. Tolsdorf for attending that meeting. There will be a future State Subcommittee meeting where the BOE will be able to offer comment.

Mr. Schroder would like to see more contracts going out to bid and for the Board to be more involved with the process. Mrs. Perrotti-Verboven asked for savings information for the Ricoh copier contract. She would also like a letter to be drafted to the Town Administrator, Mr. Luiz, requesting that tuition surplus funds be used for security projects. In the future technology purchase orders should only be signed by the Superintendent.

V. Action Items (Consent)

To be read by Board of Education Chairperson prior to taking action:

A consent agenda is presented by the Chairman at the beginning of a meeting. Items may be removed from the consent agenda on the request of any one member. Items not removed may be adopted by general consent without debate. Removed items may be taken up either immediately after the consent agenda or placed later on the agenda at the discretion of the assembly.

- a) **Approval of Payment of Bills**
- b) **Approval of April 1, 2013 Regular Meeting Minutes**
- c) **Approval of April 8, 2013 Special Meeting Minutes**
- d) **Approval of April 24, 2013 Special Meeting Minutes**
- e) **Approval of April 29, 2013 Special Meeting Minutes**
- f) **Approval of 2013/2014 Horace W. Porter School Calendar**

L. Perrotti-Verboven **MOVED** and J. Thorn **SECONDED** to accept the consent agenda items:

a) Approval of Payment of Bills, b) Approval of April 1, 2013 Regular Meeting Minutes, c) Approval of April 8, 2013 Special Meeting Minutes, d) Approval of April 24, 2013 Special Meeting Minutes, e) Approval of April 29, 2013 Special Meeting Minutes, f) Approval of 2013/2014 Horace W. Porter School Calendar as presented.

MOTION CARRIES: 7-0

g) Approval of Healthy Food Certification

L. Perrotti-Verboven **MOVED** and J. Schroder **SECONDED** to accept g) Approval of Healthy Food Certification as presented.

MOTION CARRIES: 7-0

h) Appointment of Assistant Principal

L. Perrotti-Verboven **MOVED** and J. Thorn **SECONDED** to offer the Assistant Principal position to the candidate agreed upon at the 6:00 p.m. Special meeting.

MOTION CARRIES: 7-0

VI. Discussion Concerning the Contract of the Superintendent – *Removed from agenda topics*

VII. Executive Session for the Purpose of Possible Action Concerning the Superintendent’s Contract of Employment – *Removed from agenda topics*

VIII. Correspondence/Communications

- March 1, 2013 Porter PTO Meeting Minutes
- April 1, 2013 Porter PTO Meeting Minutes

Mrs. Perrotti-Verboven thanked Mrs. Poulos for her role in motivating and regenerating the PTO this year. The Board of Education will send Mrs. Poulos a thank you letter for her great effort.

- Ms. Guzman & Ms. Rijs to Superintendent Coss and Columbia Board of Education Members – Career Day
- Commissioner of Education to Superintendents – Data Collection Updates (04/29/13)
- Horace W. Porter School May 1, 2013 Enrollment

IX. Reports

- Board of Education Chairperson – *Mrs. Perrotti-Verboven would like to form a Security Subcommittee and have a security subcommittee meeting each time a Budget Subcommittee meeting is scheduled.*
 - Certified Union Contract Negotiations Update – *The Board will meet with Shipman & Goodwin Attorney Jessica Ritter to discuss collective bargaining issues on June 3, 2013 at 6:00 p.m.*

- CABC's "The Collective Bargaining" Handbook
- Fiscal Policy Meeting Update – Mrs. Kerry Hoffman
(The April Fiscal Policy Meeting was cancelled; the next meeting is scheduled for May 8, 2013)
- Board of Education Subcommittees
 - Future Meeting Dates:
 - May 14, 2013:
 - Annual Town Meeting-7:00 p.m., Horace W. Porter School Cafeteria
 - June 3, 2013:
 - Negotiations Subcommittee Meeting, 6:00 p.m. Horace W. Porter School Conference Room
 - Regular Meeting, 7:30 p.m. Horace W. Porter Cafeteria
 - June 19, 2013:
 - Horace W. Porter School Graduation, 4:00 p.m. E.O Smith High School Auditorium
- Superintendent's Report
 - Administrator Highlights for April 2013
 - February 2013 & March 2013 School Lunch Claim Reports
 - Workers Compensation Claims Detail & March Reports
 - 2013 Summer Administration Schedule
 - Secretarial 2013/2014 Work Schedule – *the Board of Education requests that an administrator be in the building when a secretary is working.*
 - Horace W. Porter School Maintenance Project Schedule FY 12/13 & FY 13/14
 - Softball Field Report – *dug out benches, fencing, drainage all set. The field will not be ready for use until next season. There will be a ribbon cutting at the start of next season. Mrs. Coss will get the final total figures of the cost of the project.*
 - School Roof Replacement Project Update – *a notice and timeline of the project will go out to parents this week. This evening's approved 2013/14 HWP calendar will also be sent out.*
 - Door Replacement Update
 - 2013/2014 Minimum Budget Requirement Supplemental Report
 - 2013/14 New Hire Update – *Elementary Foreign Language position has been advertised, PreK has been advertised internally, Life Skills may need curriculum revision.*

X. Future Regular and Subcommittee Agenda Items (Tentative)

- July 15, 2013
 - Professional Development Plan/Schedule Presentation
 - Columbia School System Professional Learning and Evaluation Plan
- August 19, 2013
 - CMT Performance Review
- September 3, 2013 (Tuesday)
 - Recycling Plan
 - Facility Walkthrough

XI. Columbia Board of Education Member Remarks

XII. Adjournment

J. Thorn **MOVED** and J. Schroder **SECONDED** to adjourn the May 6, 2013, regular meeting at 10:37 p.m.
MOTION CARRIES: 7-0

Respectfully submitted,

James Thorn
Columbia Board of Education Vice Chairman