



Columbia Board of Education Special Meeting Minutes January 13, 2014

6:30 P.M.

Horace W. Porter School Cafeteria

Board Members Present: Kerry Hoffman-Chairperson, Karin Vertefeuille-Vice Chairperson, David Crim, Christopher Lent, Lisa Napolitano, Lauren Perrotti-Verboven, Kathy Tolsdorf

Others Present: Superintendent Lol Fearon, Principal Alyssa Gwinnell, Christine Franklin, Amy Cordone, Nicholas Caruso-CABE

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Kerry Hoffman called the January 13, 2014, special meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Public Input to the 2014/2015 Board of Education Budget

- **Christine Franklin** has children at HWP in the eighth grade. Their experience at Porter has been wonderful. She asks the Board to stay strong in the arts. Being involved in drama, music and stage crew has given her children confidence. She would love to see the middle school art teacher position returned to a full time position. Mrs. Franklin thanked Board members for all that they do.
- Mr. Fearon shared an email from **Paula Shepard** who asks that the Board please 1) continue to fund and support the drama program in coming years. It is an excellent program that brings 6th, 7th and 8th graders together to learn new skills, have fun and grow in confidence (And the plays are really good.) 2) Please review the middle school visual arts program and consider expanding the classes available to our students and reinstating the teaching position to full-time status. The kids really enjoy the arts classes currently offered, but classes are crowded and space is limited. Perhaps adding a second art extension class and/or an art enrichment class would justify maintaining a full time middle school art teaching position? The kids love the middle school art teacher, Mrs. MacDonald, and flock to her classes. She is a valuable member of the HWP community and is a great contributor who coordinates art shows and displays, participates in the school's mentoring program, develops sets for the drama program, and has established and oversees the brand new National Junior Art Honor Society program. It would be ideal to keep this excellent teacher, a known asset to the school and the students. 3) Consider supporting the chorus and band programs. Historically both programs have been very strong and successful at Porter. I have noticed recently the band program seems to have gotten smaller, though I'm not sure why.

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

Time allotted for public participation is twenty (20) minutes; time allotted for an individual speaker is three (3) minutes.

- **Mrs. Shepard** would like to hear an update on the status of the door project. She was under the impression that during Christmas break work would be done. She asks when the Board anticipates that this project will be completed.

V. Presentations

a) School Performance Index for Porter School – Alyssa Gwinnell, HWP Principal

Mrs. Gwinnell started out by thanking the Board for the congratulatory email to staff and students for their hard work and School Performance Index success and to the administration for their leadership in continuing the drive towards the highest standards of educational achievement!

"School Performance Index (SPI) is used for 3 purposes: Comparison of schools within the state, teacher evaluation and administrator evaluation. The SPI is calculated by averaging all of the CMT scores in the school, each level (advanced, goal, proficient, basic, below basic) receives a point value that is used in the

calculation. Each subgroup also receives a score in order to assess if there are any achievement gaps present. The district also receives a score. In our case the district is made up of Porter and any out-placed students.

The State's ultimate target for all schools is 88 SPI points on the 0-100 School Performance Index (SPI) scale by 2024. To determine annual school-level targets, the CSDE first calculated school-level baselines. Baselines are the mean of 2009-10, 2010-11, and 2011-12 SPIs. In instances where schools did not have three years of data, the CSDE used as much data as was available.

Schools with baselines greater than or equal to 88 must maintain an SPI greater than or equal to 88. Schools with baselines less than 88 must progress 1/12th the distance from their baselines to 88 each year or alternatively stated, they must progress half the distance from their baselines to 88 in six years (2018). For example, if School B's baseline is 76, its distance to 88 is 12 SPI points, therefore, School B's target for 2012-2013 is 77 or a rate of 1 additional SPI point per year.

Connecticut's ultimate target for an SPI/DPI is 88 because in a school/district with an SPI of 88 or above, students will have performed at or above the "goal" level on the majority of tests. Achievement Gap indicates whether a difference of at least 10 SPI/DPI points exists between the achievement of the majority of subgroups and the all students group in a school or district (excludes High Needs).

In the teacher evaluation plan, 5% of the teacher's evaluation is based on the SPI if the teacher teaches students in 4th-8th grade in a tested subject area. 22.5% of the administrator's evaluation plan is based on the SPI. Last year our SPI was 873.2 with a target score of 86.2 for the 2012-2013 school year. The new SPI will be used in goal setting for both teacher and administrators."

Out of 820 schools in Connecticut, Porter is 1 of 123 schools that have earned "excelling" status. Porter administrators and staff will continue to look at what works and what needs improvement.

Board members discussed continual monitoring, internal goals, cross curriculum between all subject areas, and Porter's 100% participation rate. The Board congratulated Mrs. Gwinnell, Porter staff and students for a job well done!

b) Setting Board of Education Priorities for 2014/2015 – Nicholas Caruso (CABE)

Mr. Fearon explained that Mr. Caruso works with Boards of Educations on short and long term planning. The Board must think about the priorities they would like in the budget and separate out goal setting. In the short time that Mr. Fearon has been with the district, he has already met with Columbia's Town Administrator, Finance Director, FiPAC Chairman, First Selectman Vance, and Senator Kathy Osten. He will also be meeting with Representative Tim Ackert. He will expand these meetings to parents and look at short term priorities. This will enable the Board of Education to rationale budget priorities and identify what makes Horace Porter School successful.

Mr. Caruso explained that Boards of Education spend a lot of time fixing problems. He challenges each board he works with to talk about priorities.

The Board discussed:

- Needing transparency and communication to improve the BOE and Town relationships
- Declining Porter's population to magnet schools and capitalizing on Porter's "niche"
- Developing a marketing plan, improving Porter's website and community involvement
- Maintaining teacher creativity and teaching students to problem solve
- Examining the Foreign Language Program
- Studying the amount of time spent on science and social studies in the middle school grades, ensuring Porter's curriculum is in line or better than the high schools we send our high school students to
- Funding and implementing common core support and selling it to the community

- Tying budget items to goals, embracing the common core and doing it right
- Smarter balance
- Maintaining staffing
- Co-teaching
- Adding more electives and exposing middle school students to these subjects
- Being more competitive with STEM and art schools

Mr. Carusso guided the Board in deciding on 3 priorities:

- 1) Common Core State Standards: Professional Development/Curriculum/Scheduling
- 2) Community Engagement: Resources/Sharing skills/Ownership/Strategic Plan
- 3) Afterschool

Mrs. Hoffman thanked Mr. Carusso for his direction and stated the Board looks forward to continuing this discussion.

VI. Reports/Discussions

- a) **MBR Subcommittee** – The Board would like to reconvene this subcommittee and will have a better understanding of the available state funds after it is discussed at the February 3rd BOE meeting.
- b) **Stipend Review Committee** – In the newly signed teachers’ contract it is stated that a Stipend Review Committee will be formed. It will consist of 3 BOE members, 3 administrators and 3 teachers. The first meeting will be Tuesday, January 14th at 5:00 p.m. The agenda will cover:
 - 1) Verify/identify list of current stipend positions
 - 2) Define needed information for each position
 - 3) Set due date for development of description of positions
 - 4) Set up schedule of future meetings
- c) **2014/2015 Board of Education Budget Timeline** – Mr. Fearon reported staff/administrators will get back to him mid week with internal requests. He will present a draft budget to the BOE at the February 3rd BOE meeting. There will be a budget subcommittee meeting on Monday, February 3rd at 6:30 p.m. (All budget meetings will start at 6:30 p.m.) The BOE will meet on January 21 at 6:30 p.m. to look at MBR.
- d) **Policy Committee of the Board of Education** – There will be a Policy Subcommittee Meeting on January 21st at 7:30 p.m.

VII. ED-099 Agreement for Child Nutrition Program Authorized Signatures Change Approval

K. Hoffman **MOVED** and L. Perrotti-Verboven **SECONDED** to authorize signature changes to Columbia School District’s ED-099 Agreement for the Child Nutrition Program as presented.

MOTION CARRIES: 7-0

VIII. Future Regular and Subcommittee Agenda Items (Tentative)

- **Karin Vertefeuille** would like to look into the feasibility and cost of adding a high school late bus.
- **Lauren Perrotti-Verboven** would like an update on the new after school program.

IX. Adjournment

C. Lent **MOVED** and D. Crim **SECONDED** to adjourn the January 13, 2013, special meeting at 9:15 p.m.

MOTION CARRIES: 7-0

Respectfully submitted,

Karin Vertefeuille
Columbia Board of Education Vice Chairperson