

# BOARD OF EDUCATION

COLUMBIA, CONNECTICUT



*The Columbia School District is a community of learners providing rigorous programs to ensure that each student can excel as an individual.*

Christopher Lent, Chairman  
Kathy Tolsdorf, Vice Chairperson  
James Chakulski, Jr.  
David Crim  
Linette Dooley  
Lisa Napolitano  
Karin Vertefeuille  
Laurence Fearon, Superintendent

**June 5, 2017**

**Executive Session 6:30 p.m.**  
**Library Media Center, H.W. Porter School**

**Regular Meeting, 7:30 p.m.,**  
**Horace W. Porter School Cafeteria**

**Board Members Present:** Christopher Lent-Chairman, Linette Dooley, David Crim, Karin Vertefeuille, Kathy Tolsdorf, Lisa Napolitano, James Chakulski

**Others Present:** Lol Fearon-Superintendent, Barbara Wilson-Director of Student Services, Alyssa Gwinnell- Principal, Michael Kenyon - Assistant Principal, Beverly Ciurylo-Finance Director, Steve Piro, Sandy Rijs, Kelly DeForest, Tony Franco, Nela Franco, Kara Bowen, Julie Rodriguez-Savino, Allison Cranick, Jeff Buskey, Marybeth Roldan, Carmelo Roldan, Jillian Smith, Jen Tew, Nelisa Reagan, Tracy Brooks, Kate Whalen, Robin Natale, Jeff Morrison, Kristen Volpe, Tammy Ekstrom, Lysie White

**I. Executive Session** - for the Purpose of Discussing the Superintendent's Evaluation for 2016/2017

L. Napolitano MOVED, L. Dooley SECONDED to enter into executive session for the purpose of discussing the Superintendent's evaluation for 2016/2017 at 6:30 p.m. MOTION CARRIES 7:0.

D. Crim MOVED, K. Vertefeuille SECONDED to leave executive session at 7:35 p.m. MOTION CARRIES 7:0.

***Following Executive Session the Board adjourned to the School Cafeteria for the Regular meeting.***

**Regular Meeting**

**II. Call to Order (LMC)** – Chairman C. Lent called the regular meeting to order at 7:38 P.M.

**III. Pledge of Allegiance**

**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.

Jennifer Tigeleiro – Said she is here tonight to express concerns for the 4th grade for next year since the number of teachers will be reduced to 2. She feels students are not excelling. She has been a substitute in classrooms. She feels it is a difficult situation for teachers and students. Interns in classes burden teachers with more responsibility.

Approved 7/10/2017

Jeff Buskey, Jennifer Tew, Lysie White, Kelly DeForest, Kara Bowen, Nelisa Reagan, Kate Whalen, Nella and Anthony Franco voiced similar concerns.

C. Lent noted the comments from the audience are likely to exceed 20 minutes. He asked the audience to remain at the meeting if possible as the Board we will be discussing the 2017/2018 budget later in the meeting.

**V. Special Recognition**

*Columbia students are encouraged to explore their creativity and the District values their individual contributions and commitment to excellence.*

- Invention Convention Winners, Alexis Buskey, Riley DeForest & Mia Savino

Mrs. Rij introduced 3 award winners. Students participated in regionals here at Porter then finishers went on to Goodwin College and then finalists go to UConn. There were 43 inventors in the beginning of the process with 26 inventors completing inventions, 6 boys and 20 girls.

Mia Savino presented the "Safety Doggy Window" which prevents dogs from jumping out of the car window.

Alexis Buskey invented "The Food Cone". One of her dogs had surgery and had a large cone on its' head that didn't allow the dog to eat. The "Food Cone" has an adjustable bowl inside the cone that fits inside the dogs' mouth.

Riley DeForest invented the "Shower Q" designed to help people with memory loss or disabilities and it also can help save time and water. The "Shower Q" prompts individual through the showering process.

The BOE thanked Mrs. Rijs and the students for their efforts and certificates of accomplishment were presented.

- Middle Level Scholar Leaders, Thomas Boardman & Brenna Crooks-Connecticut Association of Schools

CT Association of Schools recognized two students who are chosen by our faculty. Mrs. Gwinnell and a couple of our teachers – Mrs. Gwinnell, Mr. Huntington and Ms. Keenan attended a presentation and dinner at the Aquaturf to recognize Thomas Boardman & Brenna Crooks.

- "Multiply Your Options", 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Girls to UCONN, School of Engineering to explore STEM careers with Teacher, Brooke Kleinman

A. Gwinnell described the activity as a positive experience to encourage interest and exposure in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) for young women.

**VI. Action Items (Consent)**

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.

- Approval of April 25, 2017 Future Needs Subcommittee Meeting Minutes*
- Approval of May 1, 2017 Regular Meeting Minutes*
- Approval of Payment of Bills*
- Resignation, Mrs. Ann Clairmont, Main Office School Secretary, effective August 3, 2017*

- e) *Resignation, Mr. James Parker, Facilities Technician, effective June 30, 2017*
- f) *Resignation, Kelly Moorcroft, Cafeteria Aide, effective May 19, 2017*
- g) *Appointment of Nerida Olinda Del Castillo Leon, World Language Teacher ( 0.5 FTE) for the 2017-2018 school year*

K. Tolsdorf MOVED, K. Vertefeuille SECONDED to approve the consent agenda items a-f. MOTION CARRIES 6:1. L. Napolitano OPPOSES.

## **VII. Discussion**

### *a) Budget 2017/2018*

L. Fearon reviewed the timeline and process of creation of the budget and the factors which impacted those recommendations including an increase in the number of kindergarten students and additional special education tuition.

The current grade 3 has between 43-44 students as we end the year but people can move into town and add to the numbers as well.

A.Gwinnell said additional assistance has been provided as appropriate and planning for next year's class has taken that into consideration.

She described the experience of interns who are employed by Porter. They are finishing their masters program and are eligible for certification. The intention is to have an additional adult throughout the entire day to be able to split students up for support as needed.

Mr. Buskey said he works with interns and sometimes it adds additional work for the teacher

L. Fearon said he understands and appreciates the concern. Interns have mentors who are available to assist them.

Alyson Cranick asked why the intern doesn't go to Kindergarten instead of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

L. Fearon responded that the decision was made in looking at overall needs of the prek-8.

Jennifer Tigeleiro feels even though the students' academic and behavioral needs are being addressed just feel it's too much to manage when the students are all together.

C. Lent said the BOE has heard a variety of concerns. As a board we need to consider the spectrum of issues. He is comfortable with the current plan for an intern.

L. Fearon said next year the proposal is to split students into 3 groups. This is a different approach with using a designated intern.

L. Napolitano would like to see a 3<sup>rd</sup> designated space classroom.

L. Dooley asked how this plan will be evaluated next year.

L. Fearon suggested progress beyond academic should be evaluated. The STARR assessments demonstrate students are making the gains we are expecting them to. Things such as classroom behaviors and transitions should be reviewed. Feedback from parents can be another measure of what's going on in the classroom.

K. Vertefeuille suggested putting something in place so administration is viewing how this is working next year.

Mrs. Franco said she got the sense the BOE was listening but now she's getting discouraged. Having an intern split between 2 classrooms isn't going to work. The needs are behavioral and educational. She feels they need 3 classrooms. She said her son is exhausted emotionally and physically daily and doesn't want to go to school.

Mr. Franco echoed her concerns.

BOE members agreed to readdress the issue on July 10<sup>th</sup>.

*b) Future Needs Committee* – Focus Group Presentation Discussion- Members discussed the best way to present the information – possibly using 3 groups – one facilitator and one scribe for each group. L. Fearon sent out emails and postcards to advise people of the upcoming meetings and share as much information with as many citizens as possible.

K. Tolsdorf – 3 questions would be appropriate. She felt the survey gave us a lot of information about what the community considers to be a quality school. Down the line do we look at one high school? Is our school too small, do we consider forming a district at another school at the middle school level which is tied to our high school?

Members discussed what questions should be asked. One of the main questions is should we look at one high school option.

The following 3 questions were chosen:

1. How important are financial factors when you consider maintaining our current prek-8 system.
2. Should Columbia maintain 2 high school choices beyond 2022 when our current contracts end?
3. What factors would you consider to be important if we were to send middle school students to another district?

L. Fearon distributed a revised FNC timeline.

*c) First Reading, Policies: 4112.51/4212.51 (Form #3), P3452.43 (d); P1700 (a)(b); P5131.6 (a-j)*

L. Fearon explained these policy changes reflect changes in state statutes. Board members revisions should be forwarded to Lol before the next meeting.

*d) Fourth Quarter Expenditure Report* – at this time there is a balance up \$123,000 but not all areas have been reconciled. We've been hit hard with long term certified and non-certified substitutes. There is \$15,000 tuition bill outstanding due to a dispute over residency. Special education final billings are yet to be reconciled. End of year electricity propane and diesel fill ups were secured and most other purchases have been completed. There may be a small supplement from the hot lunch program.

#### **VIII. Reports of Board Committee**

- Policy – reviewed earlier in the meeting
- Budget – continue 7/10
- Teaching and Learning – continue 7/10
- Ad hoc Committee on Future Needs – 7/10

#### **IX. Correspondence/Communications**

*a) Horace W. Porter School Enrollment* – Enrollment was included for BOE member review

- b) Administrators Association Contract Negotiations (commencement 8/17/17) – An ad-hoc committee was formed and will meet on 7/10 at 5:30 along with Attorney for the BOE, Jessica Ritter.

**X. Board of Education Upcoming Meetings**

- *Future Meeting Dates:*
  - June 7, 2017 – Future Needs Committee – Focus Group Meeting – 6:30 pm Cafeteria
  - July 10, 2017 – Contract Negotiations Subcommittee Meeting - 5:30 pm LMC
  - July 10, 2017 – Teaching & Learning, 6:30 p.m. LMC Conference Room - The meetings were moved due to the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday.
  - July 10, 2017 – Regular BOE Meeting, 7:30 p.m., HWP Cafeteria (Please note date change)
  - HWP 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Graduation, June 13, 4:00 p.m., E.O. Smith High School
  - E.O. Smith H.S. Graduation, June 16<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 p.m., UCONN Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts
  - Bolton H.S. Graduation, June 16<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 p.m., Bolton High School

**XI. Superintendent's Report**

- State Budget Update – L. Fearon reported the bipartisan group set date of June 30<sup>th</sup> for budget completion but the budget may not be available until August.
- Summer Capital Projects - Window, telephone and painting projects will be presented to the Board of Selectmen for their approval.
- Breakfast Program Report – this year was our pilot – served over 4335 breakfasts. The breakdown was 50/50 between free and reduced and full pay. This is something we would like to continue in the future.
- Columbia Historical Society Archeological Dig, June 27 – June 29 – Dig at rec park. Teachers and students will be participating in the dig.

**XII. Future Regular and Subcommittee Agenda Items (Tentative)**

- a) *Future Needs Committee*- Will meet after the forums probably in July.
- b) *Superintendent's Evaluation 2016-2017* – dates to be determined
- c) *Superintendent's Contract 2017-2018*

**XIII. Columbia Board of Education Member Remarks**

K. Tolsdorf thanked Alyssa and those who participated in the Columbia Youth Services – Forum concerning prescription drug and heroin use. She thanked Mrs. Gwinnell for attending so many meetings

L. Napolitano said she didn't agree with the consent agenda as she would have liked to review Payment of Bills.

D. Crim said it was nice to see so many audience members and he hopes this trend continues.

**XIV. Adjournment**

D. Crim MOVED, L. Napolitano SECONDED, to adjourn the meeting at 10:30 p.m. MOTION CARRIES 7:0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Tolsdorf, Secretary/Chairperson