

Minutes
Special Board of Education Meeting
August 5, 2019
7:00 p.m.

Board Members Present: James Chakulski, Jr., David Crim, Linette Dooley, Chairman Christopher Lent, Michael Maziarz and Kathy Tolsdorf

Others Present: Karen Caputo, Superintendent Maria Geryk, Lisa Massicotta and Christine Sposito

I. Call to Order

Chairman Lent called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m.

II. Moment of Silence in Remembrance of Gary Littlefield

III. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Lent welcomed attendees of tonight's meeting and said he wanted to welcome Mr. Maziarz to the Board. Mr. Maziarz thanked Chairman Lent and said he has three children, ages 8, 6 and 4. He has worked in education for 14 years, most of the time in the Hartford Public Schools. He spent his time serving students and families. He is excited about working with the Board and looks forward to contributing.

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.

Christine Sposito, 62 Doubleday, is seeking assurance that concerns raised last year would continue to be addressed this year. One is the fact that the bus contract requires operating cameras on the buses. Last year an incident needed to be reviewed and we learned the camera on that vehicle was not functioning properly. Will an administrator be designated to ensure the contract is followed?

Superintendent Geryk said it has been confirmed cameras are working. Mrs. Caputo, in her new role, will have oversight of buses. She will be working with school staff and drivers about expectations in different settings, including the bus. Ms. Caputo said it will take time, but we will have expected behaviors in all areas – classrooms, hallways, cafeteria, and the bus.

Ms. Sposito asked about iReady vs. iExcel. She has seen great success in her child using iExcel. Superintendent Geryk will work with Kate Cunningham to provide an update for plans for this coming year.

Ms. Sposito asked about Extended School Year, and would like more information about the Channel 3 Kids Camp. What qualifies a student for that camp? Superintendent Geryk and Chairman Lent said decisions about ESY are based on individual student needs as determined by Planning and Placement Team meetings. Decisions are based on regression and recoupment. The number of students recommended to attend the program offered by the district is very small. Superintendent Geryk will ask Director of Student Services Barbara Wilson to provide more information on how these decisions are made.

V. Action Items (Consent)

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Mr. Crim MOVED, Ms. Tolsdorf. SECONDED to move item d. Approval of Co-Curricular Appointments to VI. Action Items (Discussion and Action).

MOTION CARRIES 6:0

Ms. Tolsdorf MOVED, Mr. Crim SECONDED to approve items a. Approval of June 3, 2019, Regular Board of Education Minutes, b. Payment of Bills, c. Acceptance of Resignation/Retirement of Mrs. Theresa Cooper, Grade 4 Teacher, e. Acceptance of Resignation, Mrs. Karen Caputo, School Social Worker, f. Approval of Appointment, Mrs. Karen Caputo, Assistant Principal, g. Approval of Appointment, Mrs. Helen Martin, Grade 3 Teacher and h. Approval of Appointment, Mr. Timothy Barry, Special Education Teacher.

MOTION CARRIES 6:0

Superintendent Geryk congratulated Ms. Caputo in her new position as Assistant Principal. She is thrilled to have Ms. Caputo in this role. Ms. Caputo thanked her and the Board, saying she is excited and looking forward to the year ahead.

VI. Action Items (Discussion and Action)

a. Expenditure Report, 2019/2020

There is no discussion as there is no report at this time.

b. Discussion and approval of changes made to Ms. Maria Geryk's Employment Contract

Chairman Lent said we are required to evaluate Superintendent Geryk's performance and have an obligation to consider extending her term. By state law we can have a contract up to three years in duration. She was hired at the end of August. She was offered and accepted a three year contract. The Board is considering a three year term effective July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2022. Terms and conditions were discussed previously.

Mr. Crim MOVED, Mr. Chakulski, Jr. SECONDED that the Board extend the employment contract of Maria Geryk as Superintendent of Schools, through and including June 30, 2022, and MOVED FURTHER that the Board Chairperson be authorized to finalize and execute the employment contract with Ms. Geryk for the period July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2022.

MOTION CARRIES 6:0

c. Discussion on Board of Education goals for the upcoming 2019-2020 school year.

Chairman Lent proposed review and/or changes in Board goals now that the community is moving forward with the elementary school plan and high school choice. It would be ideal if we were to implement goals that coincide with the Superintendent's goals. This would have the benefit of allowing the Board to evaluate the Superintendent and itself at the same time. Ms. Tolsdorf said aligning Superintendent and Board goals was discussed previously.

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Following a brief discussion it was agreed this issue will be tabled at this time to allow the Board members an opportunity to look at this with the mindset that these are short-term goals and they can be measured as such. No action is taken at this time.

d. Approval of Co-Curricular Assignments

Ms. Dooley MOVED, Mr. Crim SECONDED to approve 2019-2020 Horace W. Porter Co-Curricular Appointments.

Discussion:

Mr. Crim asked if these were already assigned. Superintendent Geryk said they are pending Board approval. Mr. Crim will share with Superintendent Geryk his reservations at a later time in a private conversation.

Ms. Tolsdorf asked for clarification on the curriculum team leaders. Are we paying staff to work on curriculum while hiring a specialist to work on curriculum? Superintendent Geryk said curriculum team leaders will meet with Kate Cunningham seven times over the course of the year. They will work on Tier II interventions that happen in the classroom, the SRBI process, and clear expectations of teachers and interventionists. They will be working with the classroom teachers in most cases because specific skills will be needed for some students based on their individual needs. By next year they will be writing curriculum again.

Ms. Tolsdorf thanked Superintendent Geryk for this clarification. Mr. Maziarz asked how long Kate Cunningham will be working with the district. Superintendent Geryk said she's been there for three years. We now have a strong instruction model and will move into what it looks like to be more project based. Superintendent Geryk said curriculum leaders will eventually take control of this.

Board members talked about the roles of coaches, assistant coaches, and other stipend positions. Superintendent Geryk said these individuals requested to perform these tasks.

MOTION CARRIES 5 Yea (Chakulski, Jr., Dooley, Chairman Lent, Maziarz and Tolsdorf):1 Nay (Crim)

VII. Reports and Board Committees

Chairman Lent outlined for Mr. Maziarz how subcommittee assignments are made at the meeting following elections. Members discussed when individual members' terms become due for election and the process followed.

Policy

Superintendent Geryk will have an update available at the October meeting. She believes we are in pretty good shape since the district adopted the vetted policy model from Shipman and Goodwin.

Budget

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Chairman Lent said they reviewed the 2018-19 expenditures at the subcommittee meeting. Per a Memorandum of Agreement the Board of Education makes a request to FIPAC regarding the non-lapsing account. FIPAC has the responsibility to accept, reject or amend the Board's request.

Teaching and Learning

Chairman Lent said they met in June. Superintendent Geryk suggested either a subcommittee meeting or presentation in October. The Scope and Sequence outline may be reviewed. Chairman Lent said Mr. Maziarz will be a great addition to this subcommittee.

Ad hoc Committee on Future Needs

Superintendent Geryk said the high school contract negotiations are well underway, utilizing input from the Board. She will again meet with Region 19 on August 6 and Bolton on August 19. She expects to have information to present to the full Board at the September meeting.

Communications and Community Outreach

Superintendent Geryk continues working on the website project. Even though it was more complicated than anticipated, we remain on the timeline. She believes there will be an interactive website next week. Discussion ensued regarding how to test the website. Options include sending out a survey to townspeople to ask what is missing, how it may be improved upon, etc. The possibility of including a scavenger hunt, i.e, asking for answers to specific questions, was proposed as a fun and practical way to test the user friendliness of the website.

Ms. Dooley asked if the staff section will be restricted. Most of it will not be. There was discussion about teacher pages. At this time there is a variety of platforms used. It is uncertain if/when only one will be used districtwide.

VIII. Correspondence/Communications

- a. Mrs. Gwinnell, Letter to the Board of Education Thank you for Continued Scholarship Support

Chairman Lent said these three scholarships are for eighth grade students: Samuel Flaxman Award, Kathy Mattessich Memorial Awards and HWP School Annual Improvement Awards. He said it is nice to recognize our students and help them as we can.

- b. Mrs. Theresa Cooper, Letter of Retirement, Grade 4 Teacher

Chairman Lent said he shares the mixed feelings of Superintendent Geryk and other Board members. Mrs. Cooper will be missed, as all wish her well in her retirement.

- c. Mrs. Karen Caputo, Resignation Letter, School Social Worker

All welcomed Mrs. Caputo to her new position as Assistant Principal. Her background will be a great asset.

XI. Board of Education Upcoming Meetings

Future Meeting Dates

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Monday, September 9, 2019, 6:30 p.m. Subcommittee Meetings, H.W. Porter Conference Room
Monday, September 9, 2019, 7:30 p.m. BOE Regular Meeting, H.W. Porter Cafetorium

X. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Geryk said the fire alarm upgrade is underway. Change out panels so they read in one location will be done before the start of the school year.

Duct cleaning throughout the entire building is done. Air conditioning was added in areas where moisture was a concern.

The security grant was not awarded. We were still able to put in place items discussed as part of the grant proposal because the town is supporting it.

Twelve classrooms are now air conditioned to meet student and staff needs.

Summer music camp was a success.

Substitute rate of pay was increased to \$90. The Long Term Substitute rate will also be increased slightly.

Ms. Dooley asked about the placement of the new PTO sign being installed. It appears a telephone pole may obstruct the view. Board members discussed possible uses of the sign and how the information will be displayed. How will it be decided what is on the sign – who submits information? Who approves? Who puts it on? Mr. Maziarz suggested students be taught the technology and how to operate the system.

Ms. Dooley asked if FIPAC will participate in teacher negotiations. Superintendent Geryk said they have not yet responded to the invitation.

Replacing ceiling tiles continues. Windows are now able to be opened because repairs are complete.

15 students attended the music summer camp. It was a great balance between music and outside play with free time. This camp cost \$50 per week or \$100 for both weeks, paid by parents with the Board contributing a total of \$200. Next summer the Board will not fund any portion of this camp. It was reiterated that financial assistance may be available to families who require it.

Superintendent Geryk said she is exploring an after school option for pre-K through grade 4 students with the YWCA, who reached out to her. This program would be until 6:00 p.m. We have school sponsored clubs, but the hours are not consistent. Children attending the YWCA after school program may still attend the clubs, then go to the after school program afterward. This sounds like a great resource to parents. Before school care may become available next year.

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

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Ms. Sposito asked for clarification of Co-Curricular Appointments. Superintendent Geryk said stipends are paid to staff who assume additional responsibilities outside their daily work, This could be as team leaders or coaches, as examples.

Ms. Massicotta asked about Gary Littlefield's service on the Board. Gary was very active in the town as a whole. He was a member of the Republican Town Committee, named Republican of the Year. He was very involved in politics before being appointed to the Board of Ed in 2017. He possessed a good balance of what is desired for the school with fiscal responsibility. He supported and funded what the students needed with a calm and steady presence.

Superintendent Geryk said she anticipates a Board member will be appointed in September for Gary's vacancy.

XII. Future Regular and Subcommittee Agenda Items

Non-lapsing account – September

Continuing discussion of Board of Education goals – September

Teaching and Learning, SBAC results and other presentations and policies – October

Budget

Update on future needs through committee updates

Negotiation Committee – Wednesday

XIII. Columbia Board of Education Member Remarks

All members welcomed Mr. Maziarz and expressed sorrow over the loss of Gary Littlefield.

Ms. Tolsdorf congratulated Mrs. Cooper, who contributed a lot to the school over the years, and wished her well in her retirement.

Mr. Chakulski, Jr. congratulated Ms. Caputo to the position of Assistant Principal.

Chairman Lent congratulated the appointment of Ms. Caputo, Miss Martin and Mr. Barry. He stated Lol Fearon, former Superintendent, sent a letter expressing his condolences in the passing of Gary.

Mr. Maziarz thanked everyone for their warm welcome. He said that in the roles and responsibilities of a CT Board of Education, it states the number one function of the Board is improving student achievement. Student achievement is measured in a lot of different ways, one of which is standardized testing. However, that is not the only way, and is by far, not the most important measure. The most important measure of achievement is that kids feel safe, cared for, and loved. That is my belief, and every decision I make will reflect that. It is an honor and privilege to serve on the board.

XIV. Adjournment

Mr. Crim MOVED, Mr. Maziarz SECONDED to adjourn.

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The Board adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Lent, Chairman