

WILLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JUNE 10, 2014
(Unofficial Until Board Approval)

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Chairman Erika Wiecenski at the Town Office Building.

PRESENT: Erika Wiecenski, Leo Mercado, Michelle Cunningham, Ann Grosjean, Mark Jones, Barry Wallett, Herb Arico, Superintendent David Harding

ABSENT: None

COMMUNICATIONS:

Chairman Erika Wiecenski noted the reception that took place prior to the meeting to thank the retiring teachers, Dianne Goodale, Marianne O'Connell, Deb Zielinski, and Sue Wright for all their hard work and dedication over the years. She also thanked Laura Rodriguez, who resigned stating it is our loss and the STEM Academy's gain. The Board wished all the teachers good luck.

Superintendent Harding shared an email from a student stating she supports the breakfast pilot program that she attended a few days and if she had known it was so good she would have attended more.

PRESENT TO SPEAK:

None

PRESENTATION:

Superintendent Harding outlined the initial criteria for the pilot breakfast program that the program be cost neutral, not have an impact on allergy students, and not have an impact on instructional time.

Wendy Knight, Cafeteria Manager, reviewed the finances for the pilot program over the nine days stating there were 400 students total at HMS with a profit of \$78.01 and a total of 458 students at CES with a profit of \$26.53.

HMS Principal, Deborah Sullivan reviewed a data for the pilot breakfast program showing the daily numbers of students that attended, the number of free & reduced students that attended, and the number of students late to class that attended the breakfast. The largest group was grade 5 and the second largest was grade 8. The majority of students that attended were not of the free and reduced status students, on the day with the greatest number only half of those students participated. Students that were late to class were between 1 and 5 minutes late. This may not sound like a lot of time but it does impact the amount of time in class when the periods are only 40 minutes long.

CES Principal, Phil Stevens reviewed the data for CES stating they changed the procedures within the first couple days to eliminate the deliveries which were taking too long. Procedurally the breakfast worked fine, the food free rooms lost time and the students from those rooms were unable to complete AM work. There was mixed reaction with teachers from ok, fine to hindered amount of work able to accomplish. The students with non-IEP intervention services missed that time in the morning and either had to be rescheduled or did not receive the services the days they

participated in the breakfast. It is a challenge to make up this work. There were about 10-12 kids each day that got to class at 8:55 but the rest ate in the classroom.

Members asked if there were any issues with students wanting food but not having money with Mrs. Knight responding there were a couple of students. Phil Stevens responded parents seemed more aware of what was on the account more so than with lunch.

Members asked what percentage of students buy lunch each day with Mrs. Knight responding that 170-180 students a day at HMS. At CES about one third of the students bought breakfast and about 50% of the free and reduced students took advantage of the program.

Member asked if the late to class issue at HMS could be resolved by getting off the bus earlier with Superintendent Harding replying that he has already been addressing the issue of the busses arriving too early with the bus company and working on a reduction of a bus which would eliminate the wait period on the bus. He noted there would also be an issue of having to provide more teachers to supervise the students if they were to exit the busses earlier.

Board suggested students take breakfast with them to the interventions that would be missed at CES but cereal and milk would not be allowed with the computers that a lot of the interventions take place on. Logistically the concern is with the number of students and food in the classrooms. If the numbers are low then it is not a problem with having the students in the cafe.

Board questioned the number of students on free and reduced and why more did not participate. Mrs. Knight replied that not all students were aware it was free and reduced breakfast for them if they qualified for free and reduced lunch even though it was on all the notices. She informed those students but most still did not participate.

Board asked the opinions of the principals and food manager on going forward with the program. Mrs. Knight responded that it went fine and someday it will come down to all the other towns provide the program and we will need to also. Principal Sullivan stated procedurally it went fine but she is worried about the students being late to first period, there is not a way to redo the schedule to accommodate that time without losing instructional time in the day. She wondered if the numbers would sustain over time or if the novelty would wear off. Principal Stevens stated that he has the same concerns about the instructional time being missed. It will impact interventions and can move those but something else will be moved and missed in turn.

Members stated they are hearing it has an impact on classes, asked if over time if it could become a grab n go option with replies that at CES all classes were grab n go during the pilot except for the two food free classes and at HMS they change classes so with allergies that is not an option. If the numbers drop off then there is not really enough to hold the program and if they increase to 60-70 then will need two people to supervise in the cafe instead of one.

MOTION: by Mark Jones, seconded by Michelle Cunningham, to add agenda item D of Breakfast Program under Old Business to decide whether or not to move forward with the breakfast program.

VOTE: Yes: Herb Arico, Mark Jones, Michelle Cunningham,
Ann Grosjean, Leo Mercado

No: Erika Wiecenski, Barry Wallett

Motion Passed

SUPERINTENDENT REPORTS:

Superintendent Harding stated the iPad buy-back has ended and 42 or 43 purchased the iPad out of 65 students. The money will be rolled back into the incoming grade 7 iPads. There is a handful left that the staff will be allowed to purchase at the same price. He stated one parent had requested if they could buy an additional one and it was approved. The deadline was Monday so that there was time for the checks to clear. The iPads will be collected on Friday. Both Superintendent and Principal met with the classes and Principal Sullivan generated an inventory list of any damaged iPads needing to be replaced or repaired before purchase. The replacements are being made as the new iPads come in. He mentioned that E.O. Smith modified their policy to allow students to bring their own device. The current grade 8 students will then be able to utilize these iPads at E.O. Smith and he hopes to hear feedback from them as ninth graders to see if it helps them. He hopes the number of students using them will help move E.O. Smith along too.

Members stated parents have loved it and said they wished they had it at the high school. The program has been in place for two years now and the current 9th graders were the first to have the iPads, it was an adjustment period not having it at E.O. Smith, these current eighth graders have had it two years so they are more likely to continue using it. Noted they will discuss possibly revising regulations to tighten up the usage a little.

Superintendent reminded the Board that the grade 8 graduation is on June 18 at 7pm and members are to see Nichole for tickets.

Superintendent stated the commencement date for Admin negotiations is July 6 and requested dates from the administration negotiation committee members to meet and discuss the contract negotiations. The administrators informed that they are meeting on June 19, 2014.

Superintendent updated on the CES Roof Project stated he went to the State today with the project to get approval. The State noted usually the architect attends the meeting not the Superintendent. He is continuing to try and move the approval process along, He believes that once the State approves the plan it should only be about two weeks from that date to get the project completed.

He reminded the Board of the upcoming events at the schools and encouraged members that have not attended these in the past to go see what all the excitement is about. HMS has field day on Monday, Hall Idol on Tuesday at 1pm, Success Assembly and Graduation on Wednesday, and the Outdoor picnic on 6/11/14.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Finance Committee met and reviewed the bills.

Herb Arico, Liaison for EastConn stated met on May 28, 2014 for the annual meeting with a reception. The keynote speaker from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation was unable to attend so a PowerPoint presentation was shown regarding promotion and integration of research based on learning and education.

NEW BUSINESS:

MOTION: by Herb Arico, seconded by Erika Wicewski, to approve the minutes of the May 13, 2014 Special Board meeting.

VOTE: All in Favor

Motion Passed

Board reviewed the retirements and resignations and Superintendent Harding informed the Board of the new hires of Bridgette O'Connor for grade 7 language arts and Danielle Nash for the special education teacher at CES. He stated they are still in the process of hiring a teacher for the grade 7/8 science position. He thanked the Board for making Willington more competitive on the lower end when hiring teachers by increasing the rates over the last two contracts.

Superintendent explained the transfer requests proposed. The first transfer is to payout sick days to a retiring teacher which will be covered by the E-Rate grant for Charter and other bills. The second transfer is for the EastConn Computer Services that were detailed at the last meeting which includes five days of a technician on site. Covered from instructional supplies and purchased services.

The third transfer is for the yearlong professional development from EastConn for professional development to assist with implementing the common core, revisit curriculum and revise as needed, and have Eastconn imbedded in classrooms to assist.

The fourth transfer is from special education items to cover student diagnostic testing, outplacements and homebound instruction. The funds are coming from CES special education and evaluations.

The fifth transfer is similar to the last meeting to attempt to get the technical support necessary. Superintendent Harding has interviewed companies for purchased services to support the town and the school with regards to technology. They would be remote monitoring to fix computers, monitor and fix infrastructure, design/maintain/upgrade infrastructure. Rob Levesque remaining in his position would be able to call upon the company to get assistance with issues. Had 4 companies and narrowed down to two, would like to make a commitment to go forward as soon as possible. There is lots of support from the BOF and the BOS because they have all heard the various complaints. The BOE will cover the funds at this point similar to the shared financial office. The funds will be transferred from the unused history day money because for the first time in 12 years HMS will not be attending National History Day and superintendent contractual items of membership and conference funds will be used. Barry Wallett clarified that the Superintendent's current contractual dollars for conferences would be going to the town to help with this item and the Board thanked the superintendent for that.

MOTION: by Erika Wicewski, seconded by Herb Arico, to approve the transfers as presented.

VOTE: All in Favor
Motion Passed

Board discussed the summer meetings and cancelled the July 8, 2014 meeting. Members will send dates to the Superintendent for a retreat in July.

OLD BUSINESS:

Superintendent Harding reported that 2 pre-k students left and 2 pre-k and one kindergarten entered. The number for Kindergarten enrollment remains at 36. The grade 8 graduating is 67 students with the current grade 7 moving up at 46 students. Mentioned the numbers talked about last year have not changed and that the number moving to the high school will cost Willington more later on.

Superintendent updated on the IT support stating he hopes to have a company by the August meeting.

Superintendent updated on the Center school boiler stating it has been ordered but is not in yet, looks good and should not be a problem to get it completed.

Board discussed whether or not to implement the breakfast program for the next school year.

Leo Mercado stated whether students need or want the breakfast you will not really know for sure, some it's a social issue, some a convenience but thinks the kids will benefit from it.

Michelle Cunningham said national research on breakfast shows better memory recall and better cognitive function and that will offset the impact seen and there was not and impact for allergies and manageable to do it.

Herb Arico agreed the program seems to be needed, it's a good idea, the numbers are not high but could sustain it.

Mark Jones asked if we had numbers from other schools with Superintendent Harding stating it would depend on the demographics of each. Ashford is very different with about 97% of their free and reduced students participating in the program and it has been in place for about 4-5 years.

Erika Wiczenski stated the pilot information does not show a great need and will affect schedules with the impact to be more of a convenience than a need.

Barry Walleth agreed with Erika Wiczenski and asked if start the program and it changes then what do we see happening.

Wendy Knight stated once you start there really is no going back. Superintendent Harding said it is difficult to stop but not sure if there is any State or legal issues with stopping once started.

Michelle Cunningham replied if there was a loss of dollars shown it should be able to be discontinued.

Mark Jones stated about 25-30% is showing a need and that should be addressed.

Erika Wiczenski stated at HMS it is not showing that, it is social time, 1-5 minutes late to class which is a disruption to the beginning of day no matter what.

Herb Arico said over the long run can fine tune it with Deborah Sullivan clarifying that the students listed late were late out of the breakfast, not to the breakfast.

Erika Wiczenski said the grab n go would be a better program and other schools handle this with multiple allergies. Superintendent replied the program would need some adjustments. Some things came up in the pilot that needed to be adjusted already. Cross contamination is an issue. Numbers might level off but could go up and could cause a logistical problem when started. The late students can be tightened up but will depend on the numbers. It takes time to get everyone through the line.

Barry Walleth stated it is a terrible program and is teaching the kids not to be self reliant and that is a terrible mistake.

Michelle Cunningham was please for CES that it was half of the free and reduced, she was not expecting that and pleased the need was as high as it was.

Ann Grosjean said as it becomes part of a routine the numbers will increase.

Deborah Sullivan asked if a longer pilot could continue, perhaps a 3-6 months to see the consistency over time and get more data.

Erika Wiczenski said a long term pilot is an option, could be done so that if not working can be ended.

MOTION: by Mark Jones, seconded by Ann Grosjean, to start a breakfast program for the 2014-1015 school year.

VOTE: Yes: Herb Arico, Ann Grosjean, Michelle Cunningham,
Mark Jones, Leo Mercado

No: Barry Walleth, Erika Wiczenski

Motion Passed

PRESENT TO SPEAK:

Ginger Halle of Cemetery Road, stated her daughter pointed out that some kids did not participate because of the fear of being marked late and there was an issue of the sports equipment in the locker that took time away as well. She mentioned the free and reduced students not all knowing they could get breakfast. She stated as a community if you do not offer programs such as the breakfast program like the other towns do, then people will not choose to move here and others will leave because of it. An example is the public library is not open in the morning which is not family friendly and in Willington people leave because of these types of things not being offered.

Superintendent Harding replied that declining enrollment is being experienced in all towns not just Willington. It is not that people are moving from Willington, they are moving out of Connecticut. He stated that there will be discussions about the issues and the program will be modified as we go to make sure everyone understands the process and tighten up the program without any fears.

Caitlin Halle, HMS student, also spoke stating that students that were 1-2 minutes late were marked late. The Board responded that that was fair and that the problem is that there is only a limited time to eat without interfering with instructional time.

Joe Fluet, HMS student, stated he was attending to take notes for his Boy Scout communication merit badge and he has to present both sides of an issue and he chose the breakfast program. He stated he did not attend the breakfast but spoke to other students that did and they liked it especially on Friday which was cinnamon bun day. He expressed that the late students were not that much of a distraction and it helped those students because normally they do not have it.

James Hipsky, HMS student, stated he also was here for his Boy Scout communication merit badge. He said he thought the late students actually helped the teacher to have more time to prepare to start the class.

Michelle Hipsky, Turnpike Road, stated there is a health risk for kids who skip breakfast. They have an increased risk for obesity due to starving the body and overeating later. Eating breakfast helps with weight, social issues and more. She thinks the breakfast program will help.

BOARD COMMENTS:

Members with graduating students thanked Willington and the school system for an incredible 13 year run.

Thanked the Board Recorder, Nichole Page, for the minutes, stated the budget will maintain programs at current level, concerned with the local control versus state control on education, spoke of the controversy within the State surrounding the common core, noted that the new president of CAFE is from Killingly and is a good resource, attended the CAFE legislation wrap up session noting items that failed and passed.

Thanked the Superintendent, staff, administration and BOE for another successful school year. Thanked the young people and parents in the audience for attending and sharing their opinions noting it is important for people to participate and encourage more people to come and express their thoughts.

Thanked administration and Wendy Knight for the pilot breakfast program and wished them luck implementing it in the fall.

Thanked the retiring and resigning teachers for their years of service and dedication and wish them well.

Members attended the FOI workshop, the art show at the library noting the student talent, and reminded everyone of all the upcoming events.

Superintendent Harding thanked Wendy Knight for attending the meeting noting she is normally behind the scenes and acknowledged her because she does a phenomenal job especially with the audit that was a big challenge and all the work that has been taken on by her.

MOTION: by Erika Wiczenski, seconded by Leo Mercado to enter executive session at 8:35 p.m. to discuss the Superintendent's evaluation and to invite Superintendent Harding to join.

VOTE: All in Favor
Motion Passed

Board Exited Executive Session at 8:58 p.m.

MOTION: by Erika Wiczenski, seconded by Barry Wallett to extend the superintendent's contract until June 30, 2017, to increase his salary by 3% and to increase the TSA by \$738.50.

VOTE: All in Favor
Motion Passed

Meeting adjourned at 9:18 p.m.

Nichole Page
Recording Secretary