

BERLIN BOARD OF EDUCATION

July 18, 2022

MINUTES

6:00 PM SPECIAL MEETING

Attendance: Julia Dennis
Melissa Gibbons
Jaymee Miller - Absent
Gina Nappi
Timothy Oakes
Adam Salina
Kari Sassu, Ph.D. - Absent
Tracy Sisti
Matthew Tencza - Absent

Also in attendance: Superintendent of Schools Brian J. Benigni; Finance Director Ashley Dorsey; Director of Human Resources Denise Parsons; Director of Pupil Personnel Services Linda Holian; Principal of Berlin High School Eileen Eustis; Principal of McGee Middle School Salvatore Urso; and Assistant Principal of McGee Middle School Tim Chiaverini.

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Dennis called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. in the Board of Education (“the Board”) meeting room at 238 Kensington Road, Berlin, CT. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

II. COMMITTEE REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE TO THE BOARD

A. Committee Reports

There were no committee reports this evening.

B. Correspondence to the Board

Superintendent Benigni shared thank you notes from Rosemary Ellefsen; Linda Rogers; Lynn Cantafi; Cheryl Volz; Berlin Public Schools Building Administrators Eileen Eustis, Barbara Ventura, Katie Amenta, Salvatore Urso, Tim Chiaverini, David Kitman, Megan Sirois and Alfred Souza; Eileen Cutler; and Angela Campagna.

III. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

Tony Derito, 35 Vivian Drive, Berlin, Connecticut, addressed the Board concerning the Board of Education’s Equity Statement. Mr. Derito thanked the Board of Education for crafting the statement. In addressing racism and intolerance within the community, Mr. Derito requested the Board consider the Foundation Against Intolerance and Racism at fairforall.org and the educational component at fairstory.org.

Evelisa Mayette, 178 Lower Lane, Berlin, Connecticut, addressed the Board concerning the Board of Education’s Equity Statement. She stated that, based on Mr. Derito’s comments, equity and social justice is not only about race. She stated she hopes the statement that is approved by the Board of Education this evening does not only focus on race.

IV. PERSONNEL

A. Administrative Resignation – Mary E. Griswold School Principal

David Kitzman, Mary E. Griswold School principal, has submitted his letter of resignation, effective at the close of the day on July 22, 2022.

Moved by Mr. Oakes, seconded by Mr. Salina, to accept the resignation of David Kitzman, Mary E. Griswold School principal, effective at the close of the day on July 22, 2022, and to thank him for the eight years of service he has provided to the district and to wish him well in his future endeavors.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 6:0; including President Dennis**

B. Anticipated Appointment of Mary E. Griswold School Principal

Moved by Mr. Oakes, seconded by Mr. Salina that the Board of Education appoint Jonathan Campbell to the position of Principal at Mary E. Griswold School with the effective date to be determined.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 6:0; including President Dennis**

V. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes – Regular Meeting of June 13, 2022

B. Monthly Budget Report – Period Ending June 30, 2022

C. Request for Leave of Absence – Catherine M. McGee School – Teacher of English/Language Arts

Samantha Buzzelli, teacher of English/Language Arts at Catherine M. McGee School, requested an unpaid leave of absence, for childrearing purposes, to begin immediately following her maternity leave through November 18, 2022.

Moved by Mr. Salina, seconded by Ms. Gibbons, to approve the consent agenda as presented.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 6:0; including President Dennis**

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Approval of Board of Education Equity Statement

On June 6, the Board of Education met with Attorney Shirley Skyers-Thomas regarding equity and social justice work. After that meeting, a draft equity statement was prepared and an open discussion regarding the statement took place at the June 13 Board meeting. Tonight, Ms. Dennis shared the Town

of Berlin's proclamation declaring June 2022 as Pride Month in Berlin. The next step is to approve the equity statement.

Moved by Mr. Oakes, seconded by Mr. Salina, to approve the Board of Education Equity Statement as presented.

Board members held an open discussion to discuss the statement, sharing their thoughts and position regarding the Equity Statement.

FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 6:0; including President Dennis

B. Board Self-Evaluation

This item will appear on the next Board meeting agenda when the full Board will be in attendance.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

At 6:58 p.m., a motion was made by Mr. Oakes, seconded by Mr. Salina, to adjourn.

FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 6:0; including President Dennis

Respectfully submitted,

Tracy Sisti, Secretary, Berlin Board of Education