

BERLIN BOARD OF EDUCATION
December 10, 2018
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING

Attendance: Richard Aroian
Julia Dennis
Jake Fisher
Jaymee Miller
Timothy Oakes
Adam Salina
Kari Sassu, Ph.D.
Tracy Sisti Absent
Matthew Tencza
Student Representatives: Alexander Halkias Absent
Jenna Smalley Absent

Also in attendance: Superintendent of Schools Brian J. Benigni; Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Erin McGurk; Director of Business Operations Jeffrey Cugno; Director of Human Resources Denise Parsons; Director of Literacy and Social Studies Laurie Gjerpen; and Director of Mathematics and Science Kara Watson.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Tencza called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. in the Board of Education (“the Board”) meeting room at 238 Kensington Road, Berlin, CT. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

II. SPECIAL STUDENT PRESENTATION – BERLIN HIGH SCHOOL MADRIGAL SINGERS

The Berlin High School Madrigal Singers performed under the direction of Tyler Boyle, BHS music teacher. They have earned both silver and gold awards at music festival competitions and perform in period costumes. The group is chosen by audition and features many of the most talented young vocalists from Berlin High School. Singers were Nathaniel Burgos, Tori Cascone, Olivia Dybinski, Abby Ferland, Meghan Fox, Nathaniel Hansen, Ryan McGowan, Kyle Parisi, Emma Roski, Anna Sarrazin, Jake Skinner, and Dawson Trotman.

III. COMMITTEE REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE TO THE BOARD

A. Report of Student Representatives

There was no report this evening.

B. Committee Appointments for 2018-2019

Mr. Tencza reported the Communications Committee will consist of Board members Julia Dennis, Jake Fisher and Tracy Sisti, with Julia Dennis serving as the Chair of the Committee and Brian Benigni serving as the administrative liaison; the Educational Resources Committee will consist of Board members Adam Salina, Kari Sassu and Matthew Tencza, with Adam Salina serving as the Chair of the Committee and Jeffrey Cugno serving as the administrative liaison; and the Student Achievement Committee will consist of Board members Richard Aroian, Jaymee Miller and Timothy Oakes, with

Richard Aroian serving as the Chair of the Committee and Erin McGurk serving as the administrative liaison.

Mr. Tencza indicated he has requested an Ad-Hoc Committee be created for the sole purpose of reviewing and revising, if necessary, the Board's policy manual. This Committee will consist of Board members Timothy Oakes, serving as the Chair of the Committee, and Julia Dennis, Superintendent Benigni, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Erin McGurk, one administrator from the high school, middle school, elementary schools and the Pupil Personnel Department.

C. Committee Report – Student Achievement Committee

Mr. Aroian reported, prior to tonight's meeting, the Student Achievement Committee met with Berlin High School Principal Eileen Eustis and Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Erin McGurk and reviewed the Program of Studies. Going forward, Mr. Aroian reported there will need to be another meeting to discuss the impact of the new graduation requirements on electives and how to get students enrolled in the electives.

D. Correspondence to the Board

Mr. Tencza recognized the Berlin High School football team and noted that, while the outcome is not what they had hoped for, they had a great season, and the Board is proud of them.

Superintendent Benigni reported the dedication of the B Gym for Jim Day will be held on Wednesday evening at 5:30 p.m.

E. CABE/CAPSS Convention

Board members Aroian, Dennis, Fisher and Tencza reported on their attendance at the CABE/CAPSS convention and the presentations they attended. Mr. Tencza highly recommended that Board members, that have not attended a CABE/CAPSS convention, attend next year.

Superintendent Benigni reminded Board members that the National School Boards Association (NSBA) convention will be held in Philadelphia March 30 – April 1, 2019, and if any Board members have the opportunity to attend, he would appreciate attending alongside.

IV. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

Nothing to report.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes – Regular Meeting of November 26, 2018
- B. Monthly Budget Report – Period ending November 30, 2018

C. Overnight Field Trip Request – Berlin High School – Washington, DC – February 3-7, 2019

Berlin High School Principal Eileen Eustis requested permission for approximately 15 students to travel to Washington, DC, to participate in the Close Up Program on February 3-7, 2019. This program provides students with a hands-on experience in the government process. Students not only learn the importance of citizenship, but also the importance of participation.

Moved by Ms. Dennis, seconded by Mr. Oakes, to approve the consent agenda as presented.

FAVOR: ALL

MOTION CARRIED: 8:0; including President Tencza

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Facilities Related Updates

Director of Business Operations Jeffrey Cugno reported this past month, under the direction of the Superintendent's office, the district applied for the School Security Competitive Grant Program Round Four for security improvements to McGee Middle School and Griswold School, and he has been directed by Superintendent Benigni, the Information Technology staff and the facility staff to determine what will be needed to compliment the budget, from a technology standpoint, for these security improvements.

B. Report on District Test Results

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Erin McGurk, K-12 Director of Literacy and Social Studies Laurie Gjerpen, and K-12 Director of Mathematics and Science Kara Watson reviewed the results from the spring testing and responded to the Board's questions. A copy of the presentation was provided to Board members. The results included the SBAC scores for students in Grades 3-8 and the SAT School Day Results. The information shared will help to explain trends in the student performance data, the impact on planning for continuous improvement, professional development offerings and curriculum to be reviewed. These results will also help to determine future resource allocations.

Ms. McGurk reviewed the percentage of students achieving levels 1 – 4 by Grade, the DRG comparison and the 2018 subgroup performance for English Language Arts and Mathematics for the Smarter Balanced Results 2018. Ms. McGurk reported ongoing work and next steps for the elementary and middle schools include providing professional development for multiple departments related to teaching of reading, writing and math; reviewing and revising protocols for test preparation; and strengthen use of formative assessment data to provide targeted support and enrichment opportunities for students.

Ms. McGurk reviewed the 2018 SAT school day results, the DRG comparison and subgroup performance for Grade 11 evidenced-based reading and writing and mathematics. Ongoing work and next steps for continuance improvement in high school English and Social Studies include professional development; revising the English curriculums; and PSAT/SAT preparation.

C. Policy Review/Revision – Policy 5141 – Wellness – Second Reading/Adoption

The Board had a lengthy discussion concerning Policy 5141 – Wellness. The Board discussed the connotation and interpretation of the meaning of the word “groups” that are prohibited from selling or distributing any food or beverages anywhere on the school premises from 30 minutes prior to the start of and up until 30 minutes after the end of such state or federally subsidized food program. The Board also discussed the interpretation of “no use of physical activity for punishment for inappropriate behavior” as it relates to participation on a sports team.

Mr. Tencza recommended the adoption of revised Policy 5141 – Wellness be tabled to the next Board meeting to allow Superintendent Benigni to obtain clarification for the above two items.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Prior to adjournment, Mr. Tencza reminded Board members the Board’s retreat is scheduled for January 11 and 12, 2019. As a lot of work and time has gone into the preparation for this event, Mr. Tencza requested Board members be in attendance.

At 8:51 p.m., a motion was made by Ms. Dennis, seconded by Dr. Sassu, to adjourn.

FAVOR: ALL

MOTION CARRIED: 8:0; including President Tencza

Respectfully submitted,

Kari Sassu, Ph.D., Secretary, Berlin Board of Education