

**BERLIN BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**December 9, 2019**  
**MINUTES**  
**SPECIAL MEETING**

Attendance: Richard Aroian  
Julia Dennis – Arrived at 6:04 p.m.  
Jaymee Miller – Departed at 6:58 p.m.  
Timothy Oakes  
Adam Salina  
Kari Sassu, Ph.D. – Arrived at 6:54 p.m.  
Tracy Sisti  
Matthew Tencza  
Student Representatives: Jenna Smalley  
Ryan McGowan – Departed at 6:15 p.m.

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 Literacy and Social Studies Laurie Gjerpen; Director of Mathematics and Science Kara Watson; Principal of Berlin High School Eileen Eustis; Principal of McGee Middle School Salvatore Urso; Principal of Griswold School David Kitzman; Principal of Hubbard School Alfred Souza; and Principal of Willard School Megan Sirois.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Aroian called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. in the Library/Media Center at Berlin High School, 139 Patterson Way, Berlin, Connecticut. 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, Berlin High School 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 Tori Cascone, Abby Ferland, Anna Sarrazin, Laura Sarrazin, Emily Roche, Emma Roski, Alex Tzetzso, Dawson Trotman, Ryan McGowan, Jake Skinner and Nathan Spencer.

**III. COMMITTEE REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE TO THE BOARD**

A. Report of Student Representatives

Ms. Smalley reported winter sports are officially underway; the football team visited the Connecticut Children's Medical Center today and donated toys they collected; and on Friday, the National Honor Society will host Pajama Day to support the Connecticut Children's Medical Center.

Mr. McGowan reported this past Friday the Model UN Club participated in a conference at the University of Hartford and the Berlin High School winter choral concert is tomorrow evening.

B. Committee Assignments for 2019-2020

Mr. Aroian reported the Community Engagement Committee will consist of Board members Julia Dennis (Chair), Tracy Sisti and the individual filling the vacancy on the Board with Superintendent Brian Benigni serving as the administrative liaison.

The Finance and Operations Committee will consist of Board members Matthew Tencza (Chair), Timothy Oakes and Adam Salina with Jeffrey Cugno serving as the administrative liaison.

The Curriculum Committee will consist of Board members Kari Sassu (Chair), Richard Aroian and Jaymee Miller with Assistant Superintendent Erin McGurk serving as the administrative liaison.

The Ad-Hoc Committee for Policy Review/Revision will consist of Board members/Committee Chairs Julia Dennis, Matthew Tencza and Kari Sassu with Superintendent Brian Benigni serving as the administrative liaison.

The Ad-Hoc Committee for Review of the Policy Book will consist of Board members Timothy Oakes (Chair), Julia Dennis, Superintendent Brian Benigni and Assistant Superintendent Erin McGurk with school administrators Eileen Eustis, Salvatore Urso, Al Souza and Linda Holian.

C. Committee Reports

Mr. Aroian reported the Curriculum Committee met prior to tonight's meeting with Principal Eustis and Assistant Superintendent McGurk to address questions concerning the Program of Studies, which will appear later in the agenda for approval.

Mr. Tencza reported the Finance and Operations Committee met the morning of December 5, 2019 to discuss the current status of this year's budget and the creation of next year's budget. The Committee discussed establishing standard meeting times throughout the year so the Committee can provide regular reports concerning the budget, high school closeout and facilities.

D. CREC Report

Ms. Sisti, CREC liaison, reported the common conversation at the last two meetings has been the change in the school start time for high school students. Ms. Sisti reported, apparently, one town in the state has changed the start time, which has cost them approximately an additional \$1 million in transportation.

E. Correspondence to the Board

There were no correspondence to the Board this evening.

F. CABA/CAPSS Convention

Board members Dennis, Sisti and Tencza reported on their attendance at the CABA/CAPSS convention and the presentations they attended. Mr. Tencza reported the Board of Education received two Board Recognition Awards for communications and the Level Two Board of Distinction Award.

#### **IV. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS**

Nothing to report

#### **V. CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. Approval of Minutes – Regular Meeting of November 25, 2019
- B. Monthly Budget Report – Period ending November 30, 2019
- C. Overnight Field Trip Request – Berlin High School – Washington, DC – February 2-7, 2020

Berlin High School Principal Eileen Eustis requested permission for approximately 12 students to travel to Washington, DC, to participate in the Close Up Program on February 2-7, 2020. 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 Mr. Tencza, seconded by Mr. Oakes, to approve the consent agenda as presented.**

**FAVOR: ALL**

**MOTION CARRIED: 7:0; including President Aroian**

#### **VI. NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Facilities Related Updates

Director of Business Operations Jeffrey Cugno reported, although the schedule has changed a bit, the Willard gym is still on track to be refinished over the Christmas break. Mr. Cugno reported the McGee gym will not be painted over the Christmas break as the project is now going out to bid, and bids will not be back in time for the Town Council to approve and move forward during the Christmas break. The painting of the McGee gym will occur during one of the school vacations or immediately once the school year ends.

- 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. The presentation included the results of the accountability assessments, including Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) scores for students in Grades 3-8, Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) results for students in Grades 5, 8 and 11, and the Scholastic Aptitude Test (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 learning offerings and curriculum to be reviewed.

Ms. Gjerpen reviewed the percentage of students achieving levels 1 – 4 by Grade, the DRG comparison and the 2019 subgroup performance for English Language Arts, and Ms. Watson reviewed the percentage of students achieving levels 1 – 4 by Grade, the DRG comparison and the 2019 subgroup

performance for Mathematics for the Smarter Balanced Results 2019. 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; strengthening use of formative assessment data to provide targeted support and enrichment opportunities for students; and collaboration with the Pupil Personnel Department to align and extend instruction.

Ms. Watson reviewed the NGSS results for 2019. Ms. Watson reported this is the first year of testing; therefore, it is a baseline year. Students are tested in life sciences, physical sciences and earth and space sciences, and the test is done electronically. Ms. Watson reviewed the percentage of students achieving levels 1 – 4 by Grade and the 2019 subgroup performance for the Next Generation Science Standards 2019. Ongoing work and next steps for the elementary, middle and high schools include professional development opportunities; review and revision of units and assessments; and review and revise protocols for test preparation.

Ms. Gjerpen reviewed the 2019 SAT school day results, the DRG comparison and subgroup performance for Grade 11 evidenced-based reading and writing. Ms. Watson reviewed the 2019 SAT school day results, the DRG comparison and subgroup performance for Grade 11 evidenced-based mathematics. Ongoing work and next steps for continuance improvement in high school English, Social Studies and Math include professional development; revising the English and Math curriculums; and PSAT/SAT preparation.

C. Berlin High School Program of Studies for 2020-2021

Assistant Superintendent Erin McGurk and Berlin High School Principal Eileen Eustis presented to the Board of Education, for its consideration and approval, new course offerings and changes to the Berlin High School Program of Studies for 2020-2021. Principal Eustis highlighted the rationale for changes and, along with Assistant Superintendent McGurk, responded to questions from Board members. An overview of significant changes made to the Program of Studies, a draft copy of the Berlin High School Program of Studies for 2020-2021 and the Honors Challenge Proposal, which will be included in the Program of Studies for 2020-2021, was provided to Board members. The changes were reviewed and discussed by members of the Student Achievement Committee at their meeting on November 25 and by the Curriculum Committee at their meeting on December 9.

**Moved by Mr. Salina, seconded by Dr. Sassu, to approve the new course offerings and revisions to the Berlin High School Program of Studies for 2020-2021 as presented.**

**FAVOR: ALL**

**MOTION CARRIED: 7:0; including President Aroian**

- D. Policy Review/Revision – Second Reading/Adoption
  - 1. New Policy #1161 – Armed Security Officers
  - 2. Revised Policy #9085 – Time, Place and Notice of Meetings

A second reading of new Policy #1161 and revised Policy #9085 took place. A first reading took place at the Board meeting on November 25, 2019.

**Moved by Mr. Salina, seconded by Mr. Oakes, that the Board adopt new Policy #1161 – Armed Security Officers, and revised Policy #9085 – Time, Place and Notice of Meetings, as presented.**

**FAVOR: ALL**  
**MOTION CARRIED: 7:0; including President Aroian**

## **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

**At 7:45 p.m., a motion was made by Mr. Salina, seconded by Mr. Oakes, to adjourn.**

**FAVOR: ALL**  
**MOTION CARRIED: 7:0; including President Aroian**

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Dennis, Secretary, Berlin Board of Education