

BERLIN BOARD OF EDUCATION

March 14, 2022

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

Attendance: Julia Dennis
Melissa Gibbons
Jaymee Miller
Gina Nappi
Timothy Oakes
Adam Salina
Kari Sassu, Ph.D. – Arrived 6:44 p.m.
Tracy Sisti
Matthew Tencza
Student Representatives: Lindsey Leary
Samantha Negrao

Also in attendance: Superintendent of Schools Brian J. Benigni; Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Erin McGurk; Director of Business Operations Jeffrey Cugno; Finance Director Ashley Dorsey; Director of Human Resources Denise Parsons; Director of Pupil Personnel Services Linda Holian; Director of Literacy and Social Studies Laurie Gjerpen; Director of Mathematics and Science Kara Watson; Assistant Principal of McGee Middle School Tim Chiaverini; Principal of Griswold School David Kitzman; Principal of Willard School Megan Sirois; and Principal of Hubbard School Alfred Souza.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Dennis called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m. in the Berlin High School Auditorium at 139 Patterson Way, Berlin, Connecticut. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

II. STUDENT PRESENTATION – MARY E. GRISWOLD SCHOOL

Students at Griswold School participate in various STEAM activities and learn about the design process while doing so. These lessons increase their knowledge of science, technology, engineering, art and math and also prepare them for college and career paths where communication, teamwork, innovative thinking and problem-solving skills are crucial. This year, third graders are studying forces and motion in science. Students Aiden Estrada, Juliana Ginolfi, Kailyn Larson and Zachary Lavoie, from Ms. Cloukey's class, shared what they have learned this year.

III. SPECIAL RECOGNITION

A. Elks Americanism Essay Contest Finalists

Elks President Paul Tesz and Americanism Chairman Mark Pruzin provided information concerning the Americanism Essay Contest that the New Britain Elks sponsored this past November for students in Grades 6-8. One hundred ninety-five (195) essays were submitted from McGee Middle School for the contest. Three finalists were chosen for Division 1 – Payton Demko, Jenalise Morales and Molly Bardales (no longer a McGee student), and three finalists were chosen for Division 2 – Ella Beatty, Michelle Liu and Adam Westman. Each finalist was presented with a Certificate of Achievement and gift card from members of the New Britain Elks.

B. Board Member Appreciation

The month of March is Connecticut Board of Education Member Appreciation month. Superintendent Brian Benigni thanked Board members for the time and effort they devote to Board business during the course of the year.

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE TO THE BOARD

A. Report of Student Representatives

Miss Leary reported, on March 23, 2022, all juniors will take the SAT test and sophomores will participate in Career Day; currently, the boys basketball team is playing in the quarter finals of the state tournament against the number one seed Kolbe Cathedral; Berlin High School students participated in the Connecticut DECA State Career Development Conference on March 7, 2022; and last Friday, freshman students had the opportunity to attend Holocaust Survivor Endre (Andy) Sarkany's presentation in the Berlin High School auditorium.

Miss Negrao reported on the Upbeat March Leadership Training weekend held March 11-13, 2022 at Camp Woodstock. Miss Negrao congratulated all students and staff for the great job they did in bringing the musical *Into the Woods* to life. Miss Negrao reported the Rho Kappa Social Studies Honor Society Induction Ceremony will be held on March 16, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

B. Committee Reports

Ms. Miller reported the Curriculum Committee met prior to tonight's meeting and met with Jean Borrup, K-12 District Coordinator, regarding the programs which support English learners and promote multilingualism. Ms. Miller reported the Committee also discussed the proposed 2023-2024 school calendar.

Mr. Oakes reported the Ad-Hoc Committee for Policy Review/Revision met prior to tonight's meeting to discuss the policies appearing later on tonight's agenda for a first reading.

C. CREC Report

There was no report this evening.

D. Correspondence to the Board

Superintendent Benigni shared a thank you note received from Amy Marchetti and correspondence received from Lisa Steimer, Senior Staff Associate for Professional Development and Communications, at Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) regarding the Berlin Board of Education earning CABE's Board of Distinction Award for the Spring and Fall of 2021.

Ms. Dennis provided a brief update on the Board of Education retreat held Sunday from 3:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. With regard to the policy for Audience of Citizens, Ms. Dennis stated the policy will not change; however the length of time citizens will be able to address the Board will increase to three

minutes. Ms. Dennis stated at this time, the Board does not have an answer regarding the direction of the Equity and Social Justice Committee.

V. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

Sarah Patel, 65 Sbona Road, Berlin, Connecticut, addressed the Board in support of the Equity and Social Justice Committee and shared a positive experience her son recently had in school.

Rachel Rochette, 61 Ellsworth Boulevard, Berlin, Connecticut, addressed the Board concerning the Equity and Social Justice Committee and encouraged the Board to set a diversity, equity and inclusion policy.

Aurora Corteville, 19 Timberwood Road, Berlin, Connecticut, questioned whether the Board will limit how many people can speak on a topic during Audience of Citizens. Ms. Dennis stated the policy is three minutes per speaker, three speakers per subject with a maximum of nine minutes per topic at the discretion of the Board.

At this time, Mr. Salina recognized the passing of Nick Pepe, an outstanding teacher, coach and member of the Berlin community. Ms. Sisti and Superintendent Benigni shared memories of Mr. Pepe.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes
 - 1. Special Meeting of February 23, 2022 – 5:45 p.m.
 - 2. Special Meeting of February 23, 2022 – 7 p.m.
- B. Monthly Budget Report – Period ending February 28, 2022
- C. Facilities Related Update

Board members were provided with Director of Operations Jeffrey Cugno’s facilities related update.

Moved by Ms. Gibbons, seconded by Dr. Sassu, to approve the consent agenda as presented.

FAVOR: ALL

MOTION CARRIED: 9:0; including President Dennis

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Approval of Revised YMCA Leases

The Board of Education, YMCA, and town of Berlin have revised the lease agreements for the YMCA Daycare at McGee and Hubbard Schools, as well as for the Central Connecticut Transition Academy at 362 Main Street (former YMCA Daycare). The initial agreements were approved this past summer; however, due to necessary revisions to the location of dedicated space, renovations, and other terms and conditions, the lease agreements have been revised. Board members were provided with a copy of the

revised leases, with revisions highlighted in yellow, which Director of Operations Jeffrey Cugno summarized.

Mr. Salina stated he understands extermination services are included in the lease for 362 Main Street. In response to his question who is responsible for all other maintenance for the building, Mr. Cugno stated maintenance is the responsibility of the YMCA.

In response to Mr. Salina's question is there parking for the Central Connecticut Transition Academy Program at Webster Bank, Mr. Cugno stated there is nothing formally negotiated outside of the lease, and there is no consideration in the lease for parking at Webster Bank; however, Ms. Holian stated there is a verbal agreement with Webster Bank, which allows for the paraprofessionals and one student that drives to park at Webster Bank.

Moved by Mr. Salina, seconded by Mr. Oakes, to approve the revised Facility Use and Rental Agreements between the town of Berlin, the Berlin Board of Education and the Meriden-New Britain-Berlin YMCA for daycare operations at Catherine M. McGee School and Richard D. Hubbard School, as presented, and authorize the superintendent of schools to execute such agreements on its behalf. Also to approve the revised lease agreement between the Meriden-New Britain-Berlin YMCA and the Berlin Board of Education regarding the educational and training facility for the Central Connecticut Transition Academy at 362 Main Street, Berlin, CT, as presented, and execute such agreement on its behalf.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 9:0; including President Dennis**

B. Adopted 2022-2023 Board of Education Budget Update

Superintendent of Schools Brian Benigni reported last week the Board of Education presented its Operating Budget to the Board of Finance, and it is his understanding this Wednesday the Board of Finance will meet to discuss and set the Board's 2022-2023 Operating Budget.

C. Proposed School Calendar 2023-2024 and Establishment of BHS Graduation Date for 2024

Superintendent Benigni stated Public Act 19-195 allows boards of education to establish a firm graduation date for students in Grade 12 for that school year which, at the time of establishment, provides for at least 180 days of school. In accordance with the Public Act, Superintendent Benigni recommended that the Board set the date of the 2024 Berlin High School graduation for Friday, June 7, 2024. A copy of the proposed 2023-2024 calendar was provided to Board members.

Moved by Mr. Salina, seconded by Dr. Sassu, to adopt the 2023-2024 Berlin Public Schools Calendar as proposed and set the 2024 Berlin High School graduation date for Friday, June 7, 2024.

Mr. Tencza suggested Friday, March 29, 2024, be observed as something other than Good Friday, a religious holiday. Superintendent Benigni stated that is a decision for the Board of Education.

FAVOR: ALL

MOTION CARRIED: 9:0; including President Dennis

- D. Policy Review/Revision – Second Reading/Adoption
 - 1. Policy 1010 – Policy Regarding Green Cleaning Programs
 - 2. Policy 1250 – Policy Regarding Visitors and Observations in Schools
 - 3. Policy 1300.2 – Policy Regarding Possession of Deadly Weapons or Firearms
 - 4. Policy 4118.112 – Policy Regarding Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace (Personnel)
 - 5. Policy 4118.232 – Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug-Free Workplace
 - 6. Policy 5125 – Confidentiality and Access to Education Records
 - 7. Policy 5131.6 – Drug and Alcohol Use by Students
 - 8. Policy 5131.61 – Chemical Health Policy for Student Athletes
 - 9. Policy 5132 – Student Dress
 - 10. Policy 5144 – Student Discipline
 - 11. Policy 5145.4 – Non-Discrimination (Students)
 - 12. Policy 5145.5 – Policy Regarding Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 – Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment (Students)
 - 13. Policy 6135 – Parent-Teacher Communication
 - 14. Policy 6146 – High School Graduation Requirements
 - 15. Bylaw 9001 – Committees
 - 16. Bylaw 9005 – Conflict of Interest
 - 17. Bylaw 9010 – Construction and Posting of Agenda
 - 18. Bylaw 9015 – Filling Vacancies on the Board
 - 19. Bylaw 9025 – Formulation, Adoption, Amendment or Deletion of Bylaws
 - 20. Bylaw 9030 – Formulation, Adoption, Amendment or Deletion of Policies
 - 21. Bylaw 9033 – Code of Conduct for Board Members
 - 22. Bylaw 9040 – Minutes
 - 23. Bylaw 9045 – Oath of Office
 - 24. Bylaw 9050 – Officers
 - 25. Bylaw 9050.1 – Official Duties – President
 - 26. Bylaw 9050.2 – Official Duties – Secretary
 - 27. Bylaw 9060 – Public Meetings and Executive Session
 - 28. Bylaw 9065 – Quorum and Voting Procedures
 - 29. Bylaw 9070 – Removal of Board Officers
 - 30. Bylaw 9075 – Role of Board and Members
 - 31. Bylaw 9080 – Suspension of Policies, Bylaws or Administrative Regulations
 - 32. Bylaw 9085 – Time, Place and Notice of Meetings
 - 33. Bylaw 9090 – Transaction of Business

Shipman & Goodwin, LLP, has recommended revisions to the above policies and bylaws as noted on the summary sheet provided to Board members. A second reading of the revised policies and bylaws took place this evening. The Ad-Hoc Committee for Policy Review/Revision met on February 15, 2022 to

review the recommended revisions. A first reading took place at the February 23, 2022 Special Board meeting.

Ms. Gibbons noted within Bylaw 9050.1 the word Chairperson has been changed to President throughout; however, Bylaw 9085 still contains Chairperson. For consistency, she recommended, within Bylaw 9085, Chairperson be changed to President throughout. Superintendent Benigni stated Bylaw 9085 will be amended to reflect this change

Moved by Ms. Gibbons, seconded by Mr. Salina, that the Board adopt the revised policies and bylaws listed above, as presented as amended.

FAVOR: ALL

MOTION CARRIED: 9:0; including President Dennis

- E. Policy Review/Revision – First Reading
 - 1. Policy 1011 – Non-Discrimination
 - 2. Policy 1212 – School Volunteers, Student Interns and Other Non-Employees
 - 3. Policy 1330 – Use of School Facilities
 - 4. Policy 1331 – Prohibition Against Smoking
 - 5. Policy 4118.11 – Non Discrimination (Personnel)
 - 6. Policy 4118.55 – Policy Regarding Retention of Electronic Records and Information
 - 7. Policy 5113 – Student Attendance, Truancy and Chronic Absenteeism
 - 8. Policy 5145.1 – Student Privacy
 - 9. Policy 6172.61 – Credit for Online Courses

Shipman & Goodwin, LLP, has recommended revisions to the above policies as noted on the summary sheet provided to Board members. The Ad-Hoc Committee for Policy Review/Revision met earlier today to review the recommended revisions. Since this is a first reading, no action is required; the second reading/adoption will take place at the April 25, 2022 Board meeting.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

At 7:19 p.m., a motion was made by Mr. Salina, seconded by Dr. Sassu, to adjourn.

FAVOR: ALL

MOTION CARRIED: 9:0; including President Dennis

Respectfully submitted,

Tracy Sisti, Secretary, Berlin Board of Education