

Board of Education Meeting
March 21, 2016

Executive Session

Present: Board members Lori D'Ostuni, Natalie Semyanko, Jeanne Gee, Kendra Wiesel, Matt Service, Susi Keane, John Richter, Michael Sepko, George Beiter, and Superintendent Karen Berasi

Semyanko moved, Keane seconded to go into executive session at 6:06 p.m. for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter: employment of staff

Keane moved, Semyanko seconded to come out of executive session at 6:20 p.m.

Call to Order

Board Chair Gee called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. in the Suffield Middle School Media Center. Present: Board members Lori D'Ostuni, Natalie Semyanko, Jeanne Gee, Kendra Wiesel, Matt Service, Susi Keane, John Richter, Michael Sepko, George Beiter, Superintendent Karen Berasi, Assistant Superintendent Brian Hendrickson, and Business Manager Bill Hoff

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Recognition

Mr. Dunn introduced two Spaulding students, Nick Warren and Dalia Abouelleil, who were recipients of the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) Elementary Arts Award. The award recognizes student who display exemplary artistic or musical talents as well as embody excellent leadership skills. Ms. Piellucci said Nick is a talented artist and also a leader in her classroom who exhibits expected behaviors and is a role model to his peers. Ms. Jespersen said Dalia is fully immersed and joyful in music class. Dalia demonstrates leadership qualities in her classroom and she is very proud of her accomplishments. Mr. Dunn and Ms. Berasi thanked Ms. Piellucci and Ms. Jespersen for their dedication to their students and to their profession.

Suffield High School Student Representative

Giancarlo Isotti updated the Board on the events that are taking place at Suffield High School this month:

- Spring sports have begun.
- Students are preparing for AP exams.
- The volleyball marathon was held on March 4 and 5.
- The Robotics team had a successful string of competitions, most recently placing 5th at UMASS Dartmouth. The team is currently ranked 10th in New England out of 178 teams.
- World language week starts Monday; various events taking place throughout the week including presenters will be at school on Friday to share their foreign cultures experiences.
- The Unity Team and GSA are hosting an International Café this Thursday.
- The freshman and sophomore classes are hosting a dance on April 8.
- The Drama Club performed the Wizard of Oz this past weekend.
- The high school is having a pep rally this Thursday.
- The high school is celebrating spirit week this week.
- Winter sports have ended and the sports awards are March 22
- February 22-26 was National FFA week.

Public Comment

None

Approval of Minutes

Beiter moved, Semyanko seconded to approve the March 7, 2016 minutes. All members voted in favor. The motion carried.

Consent Agenda

MOTION #16-19: D'Ostuni moved, Richter seconded to approve the following item on the consent agenda:

1. SMS PROMISE Girls Club Field Trip Request – Provincetown, MA – May 7-8, 2016

All members voted in favor. The motion carried.

Discussion Items

- February 2016 Financial Report

Mr. Hoff noted the year end surplus of \$117,995, which includes the budget transfers approved at the last meeting. He highlighted the Choice grant, which is at the 4% reimbursement rate level. The February food service net income was \$14,716. Overall the food service program has greatly improved over last year. In response to board members' questions, Mr. Hoff said the participation rate has trended upward this year over last, year-end should be close to what it is currently, and he would report to the Board what is included in the miscellaneous expenses account.

- Update on 2015-2016 District Priorities

Superintendent Berasi said this is a mid-year update and she will present a year-end report as well. Mr. Hendrickson said the update is a result of highly effective leadership and collaboration among district administrators and curriculum leaders. He reviewed the four strategic goals and major steps that have been implemented to achieve the targets set at the beginning of the year for each of the four strategic goals. Board members discussed the PLC structure and feedback mechanisms. Board members discussed the Common Core State Standards and 21st century skills relative to curriculum development and assessments, and the flexibility for districts to customize the standards. In response to a board member's question, Superintendent Berasi said the goal in technology is to increase the use of technology by teachers and students to impact teaching and learning. Board members discussed technology in the district and how to measure its impact and effectiveness.

- Discussion of 2016-2017 BOE Budget Presentation to Board of Finance

Superintendent Berasi said the purpose of tonight's discussion was to determine what specific information the Board would like presented to the Board of Finance and talking points of the overall changes and reasons for this budget request. The Board discussed the information and the format to present to the Board of Finance.

Reports to the Board

Superintendent's Report

- Superintendent Berasi said Mr. Scanlon of Eversource contacted her to let her know they are still looking into the energy savings program at the high school and will get back to her in a few weeks.
- Superintendent Berasi informed the Board that she is receiving several emails from the State and CREC relative to the lower number of Choice students we are accepting for next year.

The district is accepting four new students next year, which will bring the district close to, if not at, the 4% reimbursement rate.

- Ms. Berasi received an email this morning from a parent relative to the decision-making of school closings and delays due to inclement weather.
- Ms. Berasi said she recommended the district conduct a demographic study since one has not been done in six years. She suggested Milone & MacBroom for the study. The cost will be approximately \$7,500 and would be completed by fall to help inform the budget for next year.

Chair's Report

- Board Chair Gee attended the CREC meeting and reviewed the meeting highlights: there is a lot of pressure for districts to accept Choice students; the legislature is looking at different funding mechanisms, magnet school tuition will be increasing by 3% next year, the State budget deficit is projected to be approximately one billion dollars.
- Board Chair Gee sent congratulatory notes to all Teacher of the Year nominees on behalf of the Board.
- Board Chair Gee attended the Wizard of Oz production on Friday and Saturday and said it was exceptional. She congratulated all those involved. She also stated Board members are invited to attend the pep rally at the high school on Thursday.

Business Manager's Report

- Mr. Hoff said a request for proposal (RFP) was issued this week for food service management companies as required by the State. Responses are due back at the end of April.

Subcommittee Reports

- March 10, 2016 Policy Subcommittee Meeting – Board member D'Ostuni said Policy/Regulation #6145.51 – National Honors Society – is being placed on a 30-day read. The subcommittee discussed class rank, finals, midterms and honor roll. She reviewed future agenda items. The next meeting is March 31st.
- March 10, 2016 HR/Personnel (Negotiations) Subcommittee meeting – Board member Service said the subcommittee met with the Board's attorney and compared notes. The next meeting is April 11th.
- Communications – None

Future Business

None

Adjournment

Beiter moved, Richter seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:33 p.m.

Minutes are subject to approval at the next meeting on April 5, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori D'Ostuni
Secretary