

# MINUTES OF THE REGULAR WOODBRIDGE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

Tuesday, May 22, 2018  
Stella Library Media Center

**CALL TO ORDER:** Ms. Hamilton, Chair called the meeting to order (7:00 PM).

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ms. Margaret Hamilton, Chair; Ms. Claire Coleman, Dr. Steve Fleischman (7:24 PM), Ms. Maegan Genovese, Secretary; Ms. Nancy Maasbach, Vice Chair and Ms. Lynn Piascyk.

**STAFF:** Mr. Robert Gilbert, Superintendent; Cheryl Mammen, Special Services Director; Gina Prisco, Principal; Analisa Sherman, Assistant Principal; and Marsha DeGennaro, Clerk of the Board.

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** Teresa Nakouzi, WEA; Katie Augustyn, Huixiao Chen, Andrea Fleischman, Pua Ford, Kavita Joshi, Todd Jokl, Stillman Jordan, Patricia Krawczyk, Chaya Manning, Bonnie O'Regan, Prashi Paliwal, Dara and Earl Richards, Joyce and Tim Shavers, Jeffrey Townsend, Salem Vouras, Qi Xue, Haoxian Myra Zhang, community.

**CORRESPONDENCE** – Ms. Genovese noted the Board had received two separate emails - one regarding parent concerns in a classroom and the other pertaining to more open communication lines regarding coordination of the TAG program and the student/parent population it serves.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Joyce Shavers presented an outline of a program to bring a more appropriate and challenging education to high end learners and respectfully requested a systematic identification process and the addition of a teacher devoted to advance instruction during the actual school day with a structure similar to the MAG program. As indicative this evening, there is parental support for this program. Further, the district is required to provide the level of support necessary for students to learn to their ability.

Todd Jokl, parent of two students, noted that the most successful instruction to benefit children is targeted and specific to their current level with opportunities for challenges. High-achieving students are not being challenged to their best potential. We need to create opportunities for students to be academically challenged at all levels, in the classroom, through curricular and other structures.

Jeffrey Townsend noted personal academic experiences and the importance of advanced education at the elementary level not just in-depth expansion of concepts. We need to meet the needs of individual children and teach students to their highest level of achievement.

Tim Shavers noted that not all BRS students are learning math daily. There are students who mastered math concepts a long time ago and receive little if any beneficial math instruction during their actual school day. There should be a more systematic approach to identify and teach to each child's ability. Any enhanced learning for high-end learners is achieved outside of the classroom, at home or through other activities.

Bonnie O'Regan – Vice President CT Association for the Gifted and Facilitator for the Advanced Learning Program in Greenwich. All educators should possess a basic understanding for how to identify and teach to gifted students. These students have different learning needs and deserve to be challenged in understanding key concepts, skills and domains to continually progress on their individual pathway. The CT Association is willing to provide whatever assistance may be necessary.

Katie Augustyn – member of the CAG Advisory Council has served on the Board of Directors for the National Association for Gifted. Each TAG child has different needs and it is imperative that different approaches are utilized to ensure the curriculum is advanced and challenging enough for high ability learners, especially at the elementary level. Enrichment, as well as spending quality time with their intellectual peers, is a critical component of their growth. CAG is available to provide assistance to structure programming, develop community events and create a learning environment for gifted education.

Patricia Krawczyk, former BRS parent, neighbor and taxpayer noted that every student should be educated in the best possible way even if it is not mandated. Students should be engaged with their peers in a collaborate learning environment performing concrete work that benefits their learning experience.

Hoaxian Myra Zhang indicated that drills are not necessarily helpful to growing children to their potential. Differentiation of instruction will benefit every child and teachers should be equipped with resources to meet the needs of gifted learners.

Chaya Manning, current BRS parent, some children could benefit from a separate class that is taught at an accelerated rate or a similar type of option instead of spending an entire year not learning anything new. Children can be identified as gifted in some areas and remedial in others. It is important to focus on the complete child and set them up for success in all areas.

Dara Richards felt that while children enjoy learning and being challenged, BRS gifted children are not receiving the level of education they should be. Classwork is easily mastered and being bored is a daily occurrence. Parents provide instruction at home, through summer camps, and outside enrichment activities that children should be able to receive during the school day as well as part of their regular education. Targeted instruction at their individual level should occur daily.

Earl Richards noted the lack of emphasis placed on high level achievement and that not enough is being done to intellectually challenge students to dream beyond their environment and foster creative imaginations. Parents and educators are partners and he hoped the presentation by Joyce Shavers would be adopted.

Kaveta Josie remains hopeful that a separate program will be established that challenges students daily, recognizes intelligence as a talent and provides enriched curriculum opportunities that allow for these students to be competitive in the world they will live in.

Stillman Jordan referenced his personal school experiences, noting that people move to this community because of the school system and it is important that a conversation occur. These children are thirsty for a larger responsibility that engages and challenges them. Creation of a committee is a reasonable next step.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

### **MOTION #1 – CONSENT AGENDA**

Move that we approve the consent agenda as presented.

Ms. Maasbach

Second by Dr. Fleischman

**UNANIMOUS**

## **REPORTS**

PTO Update – No Report

Superintendent Report – Superintendent Gilbert highlighted Artsweek, the outdoor spring concert, the new online registration process, participation results of the parent survey, the CAFE Equity Toolkit, the production of *Beauty and the Beast*, scheduling of the Board Retreat, the CAPSS Superintendent/Student Recognition at the June 18 Board meeting as well as recognition of BRS staff and students at the Human Services Volunteer Tea.

BRS Report – Ms. Prisco noted Artsweek, the recycling/compost project to raise awareness to reduce waste in the Cafeteria, the DARE Graduation, Grade 6 Field Day at the Bethany Middle School, upcoming STEAM Day at Amity High School for Grade 5 students, the PTO Book Swap and Lake Quassy Family Day on May 31.

Strategic Plan Update – Superintendent Gilbert updated the Board on the progress of the Strategic Plan inclusive of curriculum enhancements/compacting, evolution of genius hour and Capstone initiatives, PLC and leadership training opportunities, responsive classroom, de-escalation social/emotional training for staff and assorted community building events, all of which will guide us in the coming year(s).

School-Wide Enrichment Model – Superintendent Gilbert presented an overview on this plan. While an outgrowth from the Strategic Plan, this model will focus on differentiated learning to meet the needs of all students. This model allows for a personalized learning environment to promote innovation, creativity, student choice, independence, growth and

ownership. Through infusion of enrichment pedagogy into the classroom, this model encompasses a broad range of enrichment activities for all learners at all levels. As part of this process, a new standardized talented and gifted identification process will be implemented in Grade 3 as well as expansion and development of curriculum compacting/ clusters across all grade levels. It was noted that while TAG falls under the auspice of Special Education, only identification is required. Special Education programming mandates and funding requirements are specific and concentrated in services tailored to address certain areas. It was suggested that the revised TAG identification process as well as anticipated changes be well communicated and clearly articulated to parents. It was also suggested that a committee be formed to research options, identify areas for exploration and integration of efficiencies to create enrichment opportunities for the benefit of all students.

Upcoming Meetings

The annual Wellness/Tools for Schools routine presentation should provide a summary of outcomes and how it feeds the maintenance process. The Panorama Survey should encompass a breakdown by category with comparisons from 2014, 2016 and current year and all questions and supporting detail should be provided in advance of the meeting. It was also noted that neutral responses should not be considered a positive.

The Board agreed to defer committee reports to the next meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Superintendent Gilbert presented a one year only certified staff appointment in Music.

**MOTION #2 – CERTIFIED STAFF APPOINTMENT (GRIFFIN)**

Move that we ratify the appointment Sean Griffin at a salary of \$49,456, BA, Step 3, effective July 1, 2018.

Dr. Fleischman

Second by Ms. Hamilton

**UNANIMOUS**

**PUBLIC COMMENT** – Ms. Piascyk extended a sincere thank you to the BRS Librarians, Larissa Crocco and Lori Patrick, for their efforts and attendance at the *Children’s Day at the Old South School House* event sponsored by the Woodbridge Historical Society

**MOTION TO ADJOURN:**

(9:55 PM)

Ms. Maasbach

Second by Dr. Fleischman

**UNANIMOUS**

Recorded by Marsha DeGennaro, Clerk of the Board