

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting Administration Building 7:00 p.m. – 11:48 p.m. May 20, 2015

Members Present:

Mark Mirabile, Presiding Officer
 Kim Barker
 Vipul Dedhia
 David Negron
 Gina Scaletta-Nelson – arrived at 7:23 p.m.
 Michael Rak
 Kristin Violante

ROLL CALL AND VISITORS

Present with Superintendent Mark Fredisdorf were staff members Erika Sawosko, Candy Kramer, Catherine Chang, Deb Lubeck, Matt Vandercar, John Glimco, Millie Vidakovich, Bill Brade, Tanya Kim and Joanne Histed; Dr. Conibear and Mr. Dobby of Carnow Conibear; and Mike Loizzi of Hodges, Loizzi, et al.

STUDENT RECOGNITION

Board President Mark Mirabile thanked the students and families for coming tonight for the recognitions. Board President Mark Mirabile, Board Secretary Kim Barker and Board members David Negron, Vipul Dedhia and Kristin Violante presented certificates of recognition to the students who scored 500 or above on one or more sections of the SAT assessment and/or 20 or above on one or more sections of the ACT; participated in the West Consortium Young Artists Art Show; 7th Grade Boys' Volleyball Conference Championship Team and 1st Place Hodgkins Park District Tournament Winners; 8th Grade Boys' Volleyball Conference Championship Team and 1st Place Hodgkins Park District Tournament Winners; 7th Grade Girls' Softball Conference Championship Team; and students who scored a perfect composite score on the National Explore Test.

ADD'TL ITEMS TO AGENDA

Board President Mark Mirabile stated that the class size policy would be added to the agenda as a discussion item for tonight's meeting.

ACTION NO. 78 Consent Agenda

Motion by Violante, seconded by Rak, that the Board of Education approve the consent agenda consisting of: regular meeting minutes of April 15, 2015; closed session meeting minutes of April 15, 2015; organizational meeting minutes of May 5, 2015; payment of April Payroll/May Warrants; Project Lead the Way (PTLW) Expenditure of \$15,149.65; paper bid; cleaning service contract renewal; student transportation agreement; May 2015 Personnel Report consisting of the retirement of full time instructional aide Lori McCarter; and the hiring of full time middle school resource teacher Rebecca Schildknecht; and audit services. Motion carried by a roll call vote of 7 ayes (Barker, Dedhia, Mirabile, Negron, Scaletta-Nelson, Rak, Violante).

REPORTS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

Elementary School Environmental Conditions Investigation

Superintendent Mark Fredisdorf introduced Dr. Conibear and Mr. Dobby who will be investigating the potential cancer cluster at the elementary. Dr. Conibear shared with the Board the proposal to investigate cancer cases at the elementary school. She will make estimation on how many incidents there have been at the elementary, and whether there are related factors or occupational similarities. She will determine any type of cluster, should it exist, and write a report to share with the staff and Board, and then give her advice on

testing the district should undertake. It is very rare in cancer clusters to find a connection between the cluster and the agent. In all her years she has not discovered a cluster, in part due to statistical significance. She will identify the nine cases and others if identified. Board President Mark Mirabile asked the members of TAP (Teachers Association of Pleasantdale) to be a part of the discussion and for them to ask questions so they could be answered by the experts. Dr. Conibear is going to start with the group identified with cancer and also investigate others with illnesses. Joanne Histed stated that there are concerns at the elementary because there have been four people diagnosed with cancer in the same vicinity of the building. The staff is also concerned with issues besides cancer. There is a general concern about potential health issues relating to the building environment. Dr. Conibear stated that she doesn't have an idea what the problems are, but she is going to work closely with those who have brought the concerns forward. Joanne Histed felt that staff would be more than willing to talk to Dr. Conibear in depth. Board member Kristin Violante questioned what was the turnaround on the results and whether Dr. Conibear will begin testing now or wait until after she talks to the staff. Air quality testing is not being done at this time. She would like to wait until she has all the facts before recommending any testing. Mr. John Dobby does the actual sampling. No recommendations are being given to the Board at this point in time on what tests should be done. Board President Mark Mirabile requested they concentrate on the cancer cluster study and then look into other health issues. Joanne Histed asked if past employees or students should be contacted. Joanne Histed was asked to compile a list of other staff ailments that have been mentioned. Mr. Dobby, may test for allergens, but needs to know which allergens to test for. If ailments are identified, then more specific tests can be conducted. Dr. Conibear stated that they will need to know the ailment and room locations. In the case of the cancer, staff members may contact Dr. Conibear directly. TAP will compile a list of ailments and give it to the superintendent who will then forward it to Dr. Conibear who will develop a proposal for Board consideration. Mr. Dobby offered to be available for the teachers to meet with him about any ailments. Board member Kristin Violante stated that she would like to work on the issue with staff first before going forward with students. She also asked that communication go out to the public regarding the environmental studies that have and/or will be done. District attorney Mike Loizzi stated that this topic is not confidential. He advised a proactive approach to environmental testing. TAP will provide a detailed list of ailments with locations and give to Superintendent Fredisdorf by June 10th, who will forward to Dr. Conibear. The Board would like to vote on the proposal at the June Board meeting. Classroom teacher Bill Brade suggested using building wings or additions to identify locations. Board President Mark Mirabile asked that Superintendent Fredisdorf draft a letter to the community regarding the investigation that will be done. Pest control information and custodial cleaning products used in the district will also be shared with Dr. Conibear and Mr. Dobby.

Curriculum Status Report

Heard from Asst. Supt. Candy Kramer who shared she has been visiting classrooms to discuss student instruction and curriculum. A goal for these documents is that they remain fluid while being continually updated. The Curriculum Council reviewed summer hour teacher work requests. Recommendations for purchasing materials were also advanced to the Board by the Council. Board member Kristin Violante stated she was not comfortable approving materials for Engage New York when the Board had not approved the curriculum, as is Board policy. She doesn't feel that the Board should approve textbooks for a curriculum that had not been discussed. She would like for the new superintendent to begin before approving. Principal John Glimco requested that Compass Learning be approved so that the technology readiness for students can move forward. Board Secretary Kim Barker questioned the amount of summer hours as they keep going up and she doesn't understand why these items are not being accomplished during the school year. She stated that other districts do not do this type of summer work like Pleasantdale yet they are able to prepare for the next school year. She asked what structures were in place during the school year to accommodate these tasks and suggested a late start schedule similar to LT, to allow

the staff to work on this during the school year. Superintendent Fredisdorf stated that the institute and in-service days have been used for training. He stated that the more work that the staff does over the summer puts the teachers in a better position for the start of the school year. Board Vice President Gina Scaletta-Nelson stated that some of the items on the summer work hours, such as iPad cleaning and updating are items that should be done by the employees who are here all summer working full time.

ACTION NO. 79

Summer Hours

Motion by Negron, seconded by Mirabile, that the Board of Education approve the summer work hours expenditure in the amount of \$77,805 as presented. Motion failed by a roll call vote of 3 ayes (Dedhia, Mirabile, Negron) and 4 nays (Barker, Scaletta-Nelson, Rak, Violante).

ACTION NO. 80

Materials Purchase

Motion by Barker, seconded by Scaletta-Nelson, that the Board of Education approve the curriculum purchase as amended: Compass Learning Math for \$9,635 and Schoolwide Middle School Language Arts for \$9,328.38. Motion carried by a roll call vote of 7 ayes (Barker, Dedhia, Mirabile, Negron, Scaletta-Nelson, Rak, Violante).

Professional Development Staff Survey

Board Vice President Gina Scaletta-Nelson thanked the teachers who completed the survey. She stated that at the elementary alone there are 22 teachers who teach math, and only 11 in the whole district filled out the survey. She felt that with the Board spending close to a quarter of a million dollars on professional development she was disappointed that the teachers didn't provide any feedback. Board member Kristin Violante stated that she also felt the same.

Transition 2014-15 to 2015-16

Board President Mark Mirabile reviewed the transition process that has taken place between Dr. Fredisdorf and Dr. Palzet. Board member Kristin Violante questioned what the substitute arrangement will be for Director of Special Education, Debbie Lubeck's upcoming leave. Superintendent Fredisdorf stated that specific days and coverage will be provided to the Board in the next few weeks. Superintendent Fredisdorf's last day will be Thursday, June 11, as he has 13 vacation days to use. Business Manager Catherine Chang will be acting Superintendent from June 12 to June 30, 2015.

Class Size

Board Secretary Kim Barker stated that when there is a policy change, there should be a practice change also. She questioned whether, there is a way looking forward for the Board to have information in the spring regarding the class sizes. She would like administrators to address the Board policy sooner. Board President Mirabile would like to hold off and discuss with Dr. Palzet to see if adjustments to the process can take place for the next school year. Class size process would be a fall agenda item. Principal John Glimco stated that he doesn't see being able to provide numbers and specific class sizes before August. He didn't know of any district that would be able to do so.

Board of Education Information Requests

There were no additional information requests from the Board this month.

NEXT AGENDA

Items submitted for the June 2015 agenda include:

Spring Testing Report; Approve Hot Lunch/Milk Contract Renewal; Review/Approve Hot Lunch and Milk Fees; Review Parent/Student Handbook; Approve Prevailing Wage Resolution; Approve Voluntary Student Insurance; Approve Transfer of Interest; Approve Payment of June 30 Bill List; Presentation on Eureka Math/Engage New York; Special Ed

Staff Replacement approval; Presentation from Dr. Conibear; Contract Negotiations; and Professional Development Update and Curriculum PD Update (written).

OPEN FORUM

TAP Representative Tanya Kim thanked the Board for acting so quickly with the concerns of TAP and taking action. Grade 1 teacher Millie Vidakovich stated that if the Board needs more information regarding Engage New York, to please let them know and they can help provide information.

ACTION NO. 81

Closed Session

Motion by Mirabile, seconded by Violante, that the Board of Education go into closed session at 9:35 p.m. to discuss matters related to collective negotiating matters between the District and its employees or their representatives; and matters relating to the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the District. Motion carried by a roll call vote of 7 ayes (Barker, Dedhia, Mirabile, Negron, Scaletta-Nelson, Rak, Violante).

The Board came out of closed session at 11:45 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mirabile, seconded by Barker, that the regular meeting adjourns at 11:48 p.m. Voice vote. Motion carried.

App. ___ President _____ Secretary _____