

January 23, 2013

The Brooklyn Board of Education held its regular monthly meeting on January 23, 2013 in the middle school library. In attendance were: Mrs. Lyons, Mrs. Gerardi-Voccio, Attorney Kelley, Mr. Rossi, and Mr. Dionne, Board of Finance. Also present were Dr. Berry, Superintendent, Mrs. Rotella, Elementary School Principal. Mrs. Loughlin and Mr. Lessig, teaching staff. Members of the teaching staff and public were also in the office.

Absent: Mrs. Johnson, Mr. Ives

1. Call to Order

JoAnn Gerardi-Voccio called meeting to order at 7:07 pm.

2. Comments by:

- a. BEA – none
- b. Local 1303 – AFSCME – none
- c. PTO – none
- d. Public – none

3. Minutes of

Motion to accept the minutes of the board retreat held on November 26, 2012.

(Trivella / Lyons)

VOTE: Unanimous to accept

Motion to accept the minutes of the board meeting held on November 28, 2012.

(Lyons / Rossi)

VOTE: Unanimous to accept

Motion to accept the minutes of the special board meeting held on December 18, 2012.

(Lyons / Rossi)

VOTE: Unanimous to accept

4. Correspondence

Dr. Berry presented minutes from the Woodstock Academy held on January 15, 2013. Mrs. Trivella will discuss later in the meeting.

5. Consent Agenda

None

6. Administrative Reports: (Attachment C)

- a) Dr. Berry presented a report from Mrs. Sweet stating that things have continued to run smoothly since Mr. Yanku has been out. She has been working overtime to ensure daily success. Mr. Yanku is expected back tomorrow on a part-time basis.
A report from Ms. Rotella was brought to the board's attention.

Dr. Berry introduced Brooklyn Middle School's 6th grade teacher, Mrs. Loughlin, and technology teacher, Mr. Lessig. Mrs. Loughlin began the presentation by explaining to the board, the My Access writing program. She informed that the writing program aids students in the process of planning, writing and revising their written work. It also allows students to get immediate feedback and suggestions throughout their writing process on how they can improve their writing. This allows students to move ahead in their writing without waiting for their teacher to edit their drafts. It also provides feedback and suggestion tools for teachers. Students can use My Access at home to revise and submit writing on their own time as well. Teachers can also access the program at home.

Mrs. Loughlin noted that My Access aligns with the Common Core State Standards. The 6th grade has been using My Access for four years. The 7th and 8th grades have been using it for the past three years. During this time, grant monies have funded the licensing costs. Unfortunately, those funds are about to end. The program is used by a majority of the students in the middle school across content areas.

Teachers can design a prompt and assign a focus area.

There are resources on the program for teachers as well. The training center provides reports and gives data analysis to allow teachers to plan. It also gives a record of any given student since they began using My Access. It also has every genre at every level.

In the past four years since Brooklyn Middle School has used the program, 83% of 6th graders have made 0.5 point increase, which is considered significant based on the 1 to 6 point scale.

Mrs. Loughlin shared a piece of writing from a current 6th grade student.

Mrs. Loughlin and Mr. Lessig reiterated that grant funding for the upcoming school year, will not be available. They asked the board members to consider including money in the upcoming budget to continue purchasing licensing for the program. The cost is approximately \$16.50 per student per year, which is approximately \$5,000.00 for 300 students. There would also be a savings in paper costs of approximately \$4.00-\$5.00 per student per year.

Mrs. Trivella asked if there was a reporting tool for teachers. Mrs. Loughlin advised that there is a reporting tool.

Mr. Kelley asked how many times per week the program is utilized by students.

Mrs. Loughlin informed him that 6th grade teachers teach language arts at the same time. Therefore the lap top cart is shared among five teachers. The students use the program 2 to 3 times per week.

Mr. Kelley inquired as to the more the students utilized the program, the greater amount of material that can be covered in a shorter amount of time. However, teachers can still use paper and pencil to supplement time when My Access is not being used.

Mrs. Loughlin informed that that is what teachers currently do.

Mr. Rossi asked if the goal was to have full access to the program.

Mrs. Loughlin stated that that is the goal.

Mrs. Trivella asked if the licensing is exclusive to the laptops, and how much would it cost to include the 5th grade students in licensing as well.

Mrs. Loughlin informed that it is not exclusive to the laptops. The cost is approximately \$16.50 per student per year.

Mr. Rossi asked how long the program has been used, and if all teachers are using it. He also asked if teachers need training to use it.

Mrs. Loughlin informed that it has been used for four years in the 6th grade and three years in 7th and 8th grades. Some teachers use it more than others. Some professional development days include training. This program is going to do what is needed for CCSS student success. She also informed that there is a lot to learn from this program and we are only using about 40% of it capability at this time.

Mr. Rossi asked if students who achieve can go beyond and not be held back by students who struggle.

Mrs. Loughlin stated that teachers are able to design prompts at varying levels. There are even high school level prompts on the program.

b) Elementary School Principal

Dr. Berry presented Ms. Rotella's report. She informed the members that Ms. Rotella is ill and unable to attend meeting.

c) Special Education Enrollment

Dr. Berry presented the enrollment report and informed the board members that at this time, the special education enrollment is the same as it was at the time of the last report.

d) Superintendent

Dr. Berry informed that she had no comments on the budget at this time.

Proposed Calendar: She presented the recommended 2013 / 2014 school calendar. She noted that an extra day for staff has been added to the start of the school year. The calendar is consistent with EastConn's schedule and will aid in Brooklyn staff attendance at EastConn's development and training programs. The additional day for staff attendance is a result of contract negotiations. She asked the board members to take action on approving the calendar.

Motion to accept the 2013 / 2014 school calendar as presented.

(Trivella / Kelley)

Vote: Unanimous to accept

Student Recognition: Mrs. Gerardi-Voccio stated she and other board members would like to be added to email lists to be informed of upcoming student events. It would be nice if a board member attended some events.

Mrs. Trivella brought up the topic of the Board of Education recognizing sport teams when they win championships or titles. Dr. Berry agreed.

Pre-School Grant Program: Dr. Berry informed the board members that she is the process of writing a security grant that is limited to the early childhood wing. She has already mentioned this to the Board of Finance at a meeting on building security.

Projected Freshman Enrollment: Today was the deadline for high school choice forms to be turned in. At this point there are still 56 forms outstanding. According to the forms already turned in, the number of students planning on attending Woodstock Academy and Killingly High School is evenly split. There are some students interested in Norwich Free Academy. Student interest in Ellis Tech is down this year. Mrs. Gerardi-Voccio explained that Killingly High School's policy is that sending school pay for the number of students projected to enroll. If the number ends up being lower, the sending school pays the number it initially projected. However, if the number goes up, sending schools must also pay tuition for those as well. Woodstock Academy's projection requirement is different from that of Killingly High School. Dr. Berry will have the requirements for board members by the next Board of Education meeting.

Building Security: Dr. Berry informed the board members of ideas presented to her from various parents and community members concerning measures the school should consider taking to ensure school safety. She also presented them to the Board of Finance on

Wednesday night. The Board of Finance agreed that more study might be needed. Dr. Berry has spoken to vendors and consultants concerning building security as well as support services for students who may require additional emotional support.

Mr. Rossi noted that Brooklyn School does have security measures in place. Dr. Berry noted that Brooklyn Schools have more than many schools. Threats in past years had led to the implementation of security measures that are still in place today. However, this is certainly a time to make a serious effort for additional building security. No additional security measures will be taken before summer. Dr. Berry mentioned that problems with the alarm system are being looked at. Mrs. Trivella commented on staff badges. She feels that they are a great idea, especially to promote a feeling of comfort and security for all students. She asked Dr. Berry if she had received any letter from the community concerning safety. Dr. Berry read the headings of 13 letters from various community members sharing their thought and ideas for building safety.

Mr. Dionne inquired about the recent survey he received. Dr. Berry informed him that the survey was sent from the State of Connecticut. Brooklyn School is also conducting a survey that was sent home with 6th grade students.

Enrollment Report: Dr. Berry informed the board members that as of today, the enrollment is the same as it was in June 2012.

Dr. Berry presented the board members with a calendar outlining the various events which take place in the building after school hours.

Cafeteria Report: Dr. Berry stated that at this time the cafeteria program is financially solvent.

Dr. Berry asked the board members about possible meeting dates to begin budget discussions. Mrs. Gerardi-Voccio stated that she would send out an email with possible dates. There will be two meetings in February and two in March. Some meetings will be held at 5pm and others at 7pm.

Dr. Berry stated that at this time, there is no budget deficit. There have been special education expenditures and outplacement changes that have resulted in a potential savings of \$50,000 to \$75,000.

Mr. Rossi asked if outplaced students are monitored for progress with the possibility of movement and financial savings.

Dr. Berry informed him that the law does not allow us to determine a placement on the basis of cost.

Dr. Berry informed the board that last week's increase in health insurance was at 12.1%. As of today, it has been reduced to a 6% increase. She is hopeful that the rate will continue to decrease.

Middle School Gym: The logo will be put on the floor. Mrs. Trivella is working with the PTO. Mrs. Lyons asked if there has been any positive feedback on the gym renovations. Dr. Berry commented on the positive comments from a number of participants in the town's Adult Basketball program.

7. Public Comments

Mr. Heneault, parent of an 8th grade student, informed the board members that his child is interested in attending Norwich Free Academy. He requested that the board members explore transportation opportunities from Brooklyn to Norwich Free Academy.

8. Committee Reports

a) Budget

Mrs. Gerardi-Voccio stated that there will be 2 meetings in February and 2 meetings in March. Date suggestions to follow.

b) Policy

Attorney Kelley stated the committee met and it is his suggestion that the Board of Education accept the changes to the existing sections of the policy listed on the front cover of the packet. (CABE suggested updates on statutory revisions). He informed that the changes in the CABE proposals are not substantial in nature; they are all relatively minor proposals.

Mrs. Lyons asked for clarification on shadowed language. Attorney Kelley informed her that the shadowed language is language that has been added to the existing policy. He acknowledged that changes are suggestions from CABE. He recommends that the Board of Education adapt the revisions as suggested by CABE.

c) Curriculum

Mrs. Gerardi-Voccio stated that there is a meeting on Monday at 3:45 at the middle school.

d) Negotiations

Dr. Berry informed the board members that the 30 day period for public comments on the proposed BEA contract has now ended, and the contract has been finalized.

e) Capital

The first meeting will be February 13, 2013.

f) EASTCONN

Nothing to report

g) High School Relations

Mrs. Gerardi-Voccio informed that she was present at the Woodstock Academy budget presentation. She spoke to the Board of Finance concerning the 4.6% increase in tuition. She also spoke to the Board of Education at their meeting about said increase.

Dr. Berry informed that the present tuition rates are as follows:

Woodstock Academy	\$11,475 per student per year
Killingly High School	\$10,899 per student per year
Norwich Free Academy	\$11,200 per student per year

Discussion ensued concerning tuition rates for high schools.

h) High School Study Committee

Meetings were held on November 28, 2012 and January 23, 2013. The meetings will continue to take place before the Board of Education meetings. Some of the topics they are discussing are CAPT scores, graduation rate, revisions to tuition letter, shadowing with members of the National Junior Honor Society, amending the Killingly High School contract, and the transportation issue for schools outside of Woodstock Academy and Killingly High School.

i) CABE

Nothing

j) Recreation Committee

Mrs. Lyons stated that she did attend the meeting and that there was nothing major to report. However, there was some discussion of possibly moving the recreation office to another building.

k) Wall Committee

Nothing to report

9 Old Business

None

10 New Business

None

11 Public Comments

None

12 Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 9:27 pm.
(Lyons / Rossi)
Vote: Unanimous to accept

Respectfully Submitted,

Joann M. Engel
Recording Secretary