

January 29, 2014

The Brooklyn Board of Education held its regular monthly meeting on January 29, 2014 in the middle school library. In attendance were: Mrs. Lyons, Mrs. Johnson, Mr. Rossi, and Mrs. Majek. Also present Dr. Berry, Superintendent, Ms. Rotella, Elementary School Principal, and Mr. Otto, Board of Finance. Members of the teaching staff and public were in the audience. Mr. DonFrancisco arrived at 7:38.

Absent: Attorney Kelley

1. Call to Order

Mrs. Lyons called the meeting to order at 7:08 pm.

2. Comments by:

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

3. Minutes of

- Board Meeting held on December 18, 2013

Motion to accept the meeting minutes of December 18, 2013

(Johnson / Rossi)

Unanimous vote to accept

4. Correspondence

None

5. Consent Agenda

None

6. Administrative Reports:

a. Elementary School Principal

- Presentation on Mid-Year Benchmark testing

Ms. Rotella presented a report and data to the Board of Education members on the benchmark testing given to elementary students during the past month. She informed the members that Common

Core Standards are much higher than testing that has been given to the students in the past. Overall, student scores were low in September, 2013 and in January, 2014. In one of the tests to identify correct letter sounds, 60% of students in grade 1 were in the red zone, indicating poor performance. She stated that the goal is to have 80% of students above average, 15% in the average range, and 5% in the below average range. Her data showed that by grade 2, students are showing greater improvement, and some of the gaps are beginning to close. Ms. Rotella stated that she would like to see the number of students who require interventions decrease, as well as the number of students who are currently struggling daily.

She stated that Common Core Standards for kindergarten students are geared toward a full day school program. In her opinion, students would benefit from full day kindergarten.

b. Middle School Principal

- Report on After School Program

Included in the board packet

c. Assistant Principal

- Winter Sports Report

Included in the board packet

d. Special Education Director

- Special Education Enrollment Report

Dr. Berry presented the Special Education Enrollment report. She noted that while the enrollment is not significantly higher, the needs of the students receiving special education services are much more severe.

e. Superintendent

- School Calendar 2014 – 2015

Dr. Berry recommended that the board members delay action on a school calendar for 2014-2015. The State of Connecticut will be sending out a regional coordination calendar for all public schools. The board members may want to take some of the state's recommendations into consideration before approving Brooklyn's school calendar.

- High School Choice

Dr. Berry informed the board members that the final number of students attending specific high schools is not available yet. Many students who applied to H.H. Ellis Tech have not received acceptance / rejection letters.

- NFA Report

Dr. Berry informed the members that she has been in contact with the headmaster at Norwich Free Academy. They have offered to provide transportation for one year for Brooklyn students to attend NFA. After one year, the Town of Brooklyn would be responsible to provide transportation for the following years.

The board members stated that they are not interested in a one-year transportation agreement at this time.

- 2014 - 2015 Budget Preparation / Schedule of Meetings

The meetings will be February 5th and 12th, 2014 at 6:00 pm, and March 5th and 12th, 2014 at 6:00 pm.

Dr. Berry stated that with regard to a full day kindergarten program, there are some possible variations. Offering both a full day class as well as a half-day session could be considered. Given this option, parents could choose a full or half day program. Dr. Berry also stated that the board should consider changing the age requirement for admission to pre-school to January 1st. Due to the age of some students, they are not developmentally ready to handle the rigors of kindergarten. She also noted that there will be additional costs in the budget if we have a full day program. Some costs to consider are teaching staff, paraprofessionals, and health insurance. The elimination of the Kindergarten mid-day bus runs would result in a savings in the bus transportation costs. At this

time, high school enrollment is down, which would also help with the financial costs of a full day kindergarten program.

- Enrollment Report

Included in the board packet

- Freedom of Information Training – January 28th

Mr. DonFrancisco attended the FOI training on January 28, 2014. He stated that the training was very informative.

- Technology State Grant

Dr. Berry stated that the technology grant has been approved, but she is unsure when the funds will be released.

- Rose Wing Roof

Dr. Berry informed the board members that there is a leak around the chimney in the roof of the rose wing. The cost of the repairs to the roof is about \$5000. The roof is approximately 26 years old and needs to be replaced.

Dr. Berry stated that the reimbursement rate from the state has dropped 10%.

- Union Contract

Dr. Berry informed the board members that she met with the union president who informed her that they are considering changing unions.

- State Report on Small School Districts

Included in board packet

- CAFE Regional Meetings

Dr. Berry informed the board members that she has received notice of a regional meeting to be held on February 6, 2014 at 8:00 am in Plainfield. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss educational needs in the State of Connecticut. If any board member would like to attend, please let her know.

7. Public Comments

Mr. Otto commented that enrollment is decreasing in many school districts. It may be time to consider smaller districts nearby to determine interest in regionalization.

8. Committee Reports

- a. Policy – nothing to report
- b. Curriculum – Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Majek are members of this Board committee. This committee will meet four times a year.
- c. Negotiations – The negotiations committee will consist of Mrs. Johnson, Mr. Rossi, and Mrs. Lyons.
- d. Capital – Regarding the fire alarm system, repairs to the middle school building are estimated at \$84,000, and repairs to the elementary school building are estimated at \$200,000.

Middle School Playground and North Parking Lot

Repair Projects – meeting date

Mr. Voccio stated that a schedule of Capital Projects Committee meetings will be forthcoming. The Board of Education can make their proposals to the Capital Committee at the meeting.

- e. EastConn – nothing to report at this time
- f. High School Relations – Woodstock Academy and Killingly High School

Mr. Rossi informed the board members that Woodstock Academy has increased their tuition rate by 3.98 % which is a total of \$12,617 per student for the 2014-2015 school year.
- g. Recreation Committee – Mrs. Lyons informed that the Recreation Department is waiting for their new before and after school program to start. Mr. Lobousch is implementing start-up as quickly as possible.

8. Committee Reports (*continued*)

Representatives from the:

PTO – none

BEA – none

BOF – none

9. Old Business – none

10. New Business

Dr. Berry presented the board members with a draft of the 2014 – 2015 budget. She went through each account. She detailed some anticipated and projected costs based on current personnel and present contracts.

Mrs. Lyons asked Dr. Berry if she was aware of any materials or supplies that are needed for the kindergarten program to improve its success. Dr. Berry will speak to Ms. Rotella and ask where she feels the weaknesses are the greatest.

Mrs. Majek asked if there was any data concerning RTI and SRBI. She also asked if there are Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions in place. Mrs. Berry will contact the elementary principal for this information.

11. Public Comments – none

12. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 9:40 pm
(Johnson / Rossi)
Unanimous vote to accept

Respectfully Submitted

Joann M. Engel

Recording Secretary

John DonFrancisco, Secretary