

September 25, 2013

The Brooklyn Board of Education held its regular monthly meeting on September 25, 2013 in the middle school library. In attendance were: Ms. Gerardi-Voccio, Attorney Kelley, Mr. Rossi, Mrs. Trivella, Mrs. Lyons, and Mrs. Johnson. Also present Dr. Berry, Superintendent, and Mr. Yanku, Middle School Principal, and Mr. Ives, Board of Finance. Members of the teaching staff and the public were in the audience.

Absent:

1. Call to Order

Ms. Gerardi-Voccio called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm.

2. Comments by:

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

A parent who volunteers at the elementary school in kindergarten expressed a concern. She stated that while volunteering in the classroom, the paraprofessional was pulled from the room to service another student in another classroom. She stated that she is concerned about the number of students and their safety when left with one teacher. She also expressed a concern about different paraprofessionals being rotated in a classroom every 45 minutes.

Ms. Gerardi-Voccio stated that she had already been made aware of the concern earlier in the day and is working with Dr. Berry to remedy the situation.

Dr. Berry stated that she was aware of the situation and as of today it would not continue.

A parent asked if student lunch account information could be posted online. She stated it would be helpful to parent to keep track of the child's account balances. She stated that Lisa Arends had done some research regarding online lunch accounts. Dr. Berry asked if she would get the information to her for further review.

A parent asked how the district is making up for the half-day kindergarten when the Common Core State Standards are designed for full day. The Board will to ask Ms. Rotella to attend next months meeting and address this concern.

A parent asked why recent Board of Education Meeting Minutes had not been posted to the website. Board members stated that they had seen them posted on the website.

3. Minutes of
 - Board Meeting held on August 28, 2013

Motion to accept the meeting minutes of August 28, 2013
(Johnson / Kelley)
Unanimous vote to accept

4. Correspondence:

Dr. Berry presented the Board with a letter received from Parish Hill requesting Parish Hill remain a high school of choice not a designated high school for Brooklyn School students. If the Board makes Parish Hill a designated school, the district will be responsible for transportation. If it remains a school of choice, the district will not provide transportation. There is one Brooklyn student currently enrolled at Parish Hill High School for the 2013-2014 school year.

5. Consent Agenda

None

6. Administrative Reports:

- a. Middle School Principal

Mr. Yanku informed the Board about the high school visits, which take place in October. Brooklyn 8th grade students visit Woodstock Academy, Killingly High School, and Norwich Free Academy. Representatives from H.H. Ellis Tech, ACT and Quinnebaug Valley Middle College meet with 8th graders at an assembly to introduce their programs. Representatives from Marianapolis, Pomfret Preparatory and Parish Hill will also visit with small groups of students who are interested in their programs.

Mr. Yanku presented CMT data in a power point presentation. The data showed how students achieve over time. He presented a number of graphs, which show growth for grade levels. The scales showed growth of students from grade 3 to grade 4 in math, reading and writing. He also showed scales on how middle school performed. Growth trajectories over time were shown from grade 5 to grade 8 in math, reading and writing. Graphs also showed the growth from 2006 through 2013 by grade level. All information

presented showed significant growth in all grades through the years. He also stated that this might be the last year of CMT testing.

Mr. Yanku presented the Renaissance Learning Star Math and Star Reading program. He explained that it is a software assessment, which is rigorously tied to the Common Core State Standards. He stated that it will help teachers evaluate students and better implement interventions as needed and set up realistic goals for students.

He also noted that the benchmark is set by a sampling of students across the United States, it could also be based on international standards.

Board members commented that the CMT scores show substantial growth through the grade levels. They thanked the great teachers and administrators who serve the Brooklyn students, as well as the My Access program in grade six.

Mr. Yanku publicly thanked the staff for taking the initiative and accepting the challenges of preparing the students for the Common Core State Standards.

b. Elementary School Principal

Mrs. Johnson asked a question about the report that was in the board packets. She questioned why the number of first grade students receiving interventions (24%) was so high compared to the other grades. She will ask Ms. Rotella at the next Board of Education meeting.

c. Assistant Principal

Report presented by Mr. Yanku. The middle school climate meeting will be October 7, 2013.

d. Special Education Director

- Special Education Enrollment

Dr. Berry presented the Special Education report. She noted that the total number of special education students is similar to last year. However, there has been a dramatic change in the severity of the students' needs. Many require out of district placements, or in house with a one to one paraprofessional. Some also require a

one to one nurse. These needs have caused a significant increase in the 2013-2014 school budget.

e. Superintendent

- Legislative Report – 2013

The report was not available at the meeting. Dr. Berry stated that if anyone was interested in seeing the report she will provide it.

- Long term substitutes

Dr. Berry stated that there are currently a number of long term substitutes. She informed the Board members that after the substitutes 20th day in the same position, they receive pay reflecting the regular step wage that they are entitled to based on their years of experience. Thus, there is a significant impact on the budget.

Members noted that it might be time to look into a policy change regarding long-term substitutes.

Attorney Kelley asked if any staff members who are out long term qualify to receive benefits under short term disability rather than contractually.

Dr. Berry informed that there is no benefit in the contract for short-term disability.

- High School Enrollment update

Dr. Berry stated that there is an increase in the Brooklyn enrollment at QVMC and Ellis Tech schools. Therefore, there is a decrease in the number of students at Killingly High School and Woodstock Academy.

The final number will be known on October 1, 2013 when high schools finalize the Brooklyn enrollment count for tuition billing.

- Use of Facilities

Dr. Berry presented the Use of Facilities calendars for September and October. She stated that community

activities use the facilities without charge. However, if extra custodial hours are incurred, payment is made based on those costs. Facilities are open to the public. Private use is determined with caution.

- Enrollment Report – as of September 17, 2013

Dr. Berry presented the report.

- 2013 – 2014 Staff Absentee Report

Dr. Berry presented the report.

7. Public Comments

None

8. Committee Reports

a. Budget –

Dr. Berry stated that the budget is currently showing a deficit of \$220,000 in the special education account. The budget is also \$85,000 over in the substitute teacher account, and there is an overage in the health personnel account due to special education students needing full time nurses.

Mrs. Trivella asked if a time had been set up for the new middle school staff members to meet the Board of Education members. Dr. Berry informed her that they will schedule introductions at the next board of education meeting.

Mr. Rossi asked how to move forward with the alarm system. Dr. Berry informed that a bid needs to be written. Before the job can go out to bid, an assessment has to be done by a knowledgeable engineering company to determine the scope of the services needed. The cost for the assessment is \$6,000 for the elementary school and \$7,200 for the middle school.

Mr. Dionne recommended using capital money for the assessment. He also recommended that a facilities committee work with the Board of Finance on an ongoing basis to discuss long-range plans and a priority list for both

buildings and grounds, as well as up to date numbers. The Board of Education members agreed.

b. Policy – September 23, 2013

Attorney Kelley handed out some policies for the members to review and discuss at the next meeting. The policies were suggested recommendations by CAFE. He also suggested that the Board should address the policy for long-term substitutes. He stated that there was a meeting on September 23rd, which gave the committee the ability to review the policies from CAFE. The committee is in the process of reviewing their recommendations. CAFE's suggestions were minimal and Brooklyn's policies were in good shape.

Attorney Kelley will submit the technical changes at the next meeting.

NOTE: There is a typographical error in policy 2000.1
A line is repeated.

c. Curriculum –

The next meeting is October 21, 2013 in the middle school library.

d. Negotiations – (Local 1303 Contract)

Dr. Berry informed that the attorney recommended waiting until January to begin.

e. Capital –

See above regarding the alarm system.

f. EastConn –

Mrs. Johnson attended the meeting and handed out minutes. She informed that Head Start has a grant to help with the emotional readiness for pre-school and kindergarten students.

g. High School Relations –

There was a meeting at Woodstock. A vote was held to extend a contract to Christopher Sandford, presently principal at Wheeler High School in North Stonington, as the new headmaster.

h. High School Study Committee –

CAPT scores and the importance of monitoring Brooklyn's high school student achievement were discussed.

i. Recreation Committee –

There was a meeting on September 9, 2013. There will also be a meeting in early October. As of Monday, Bucky Lohbusch has been reinstated as Brooklyn's Recreation Director.

Representatives from the:

PTO – none

BEA – none

BOF – none

9. Old Business –

None

10. New Business –

None

11. Public Comments –

None

12. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 9:00 pm
(Johnson / Trivella)
Unanimous vote to accept

Respectfully Submitted

Joann M. Engel

Recording Secretary