

**THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO BOARD APPROVAL AT THE Nov 06, 2014 MEETING
REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 4 Board of Education**

Sept. 04, 2014

A regular meeting of the Regional School District No. 4 Board of Education was held on Thursday, Sept, 04, 2014 in the John Winthrop Middle School Library, with the following Board members in attendance:

Leigh Rankin, Lauri Wichtowski, Elaine Fitzgibbons, Jim Olson, Mario Gioco, Ann Monaghan, and Jennifer Clark

Also in attendance:

Administrators: Superintendent Dr. Ruth I. Levy,
Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Joanne Beekley
Business Manager Garth Sawyer;
Valley Regional Principal Kristina Martineau;

Board Clerk: Jennifer Bryan

CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chair Ann Monaghan called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

CONSENT AGENDA

The minutes of the annual meeting of May 05, 2014 were pulled out of the Consent Agenda. On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to approve the minutes of May 05, 2014 as presented.

The minutes of the regular meeting of May 07, 2014 were pulled out of the Consent Agenda. On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to approve the minutes of May 07, 2014 as presented.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

8 citizens were present. No comments were made.

OTHER ITEMS

Introduction of New Hires

Superintendent Dr. Ruth Levy introduced new teachers recently hired at John Winthrop Middle School, as well as Mary Jane Maltezos, who was hired as the principal's secretary.

Valley Principal Kristina Martineau introduced new teachers recently hired at Valley Regional High School.

There was a first reading on the request to approve a student trip to the New England Music Festival in Keene, NH March 19-21, 2015. Teacher Laura Hilton presented trip details to the Board for their consideration and possible approval. Questions from Board members were answered.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to approve the student trip to the New England Music Festival in Keene, NH March 19-21, 2015 as presented.

There was a first reading on the request to approve a student trip to the Heritage Music Festival in Annapolis, MD April 23-26, 2015. Teacher Laura Hilton presented trip details to the Board for their consideration and possible approval. Questions from Board members were answered.

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously VOTED to approve the student trip to the Heritage Music Festival in Annapolis, MD April 23-26, 2015 as presented.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Levy updated the Board on a variety of District activities. She noted that it had been a wonderful opening for all of the schools. She also reported that it had been a very busy summer for hiring, and many wonderful new staff members have been hired to fill vacancies across all of the schools.

Dr. Levy reported that on-line payment for the cafeterias is now available on the website.

There was a brief discussion regarding pending policy #5114 recommended for approval by the Joint BOE Policy Committee and up for a second reading and vote at the October 02 Joint BOE meeting. It was determined that some Board members preferred to attend the upcoming Joint BOE Policy Committee meeting to discuss the policy, as opposed to having a lengthy discussion at this meeting.

Dr. Levy shared some of the content of the exit interviews she held with all 2014 graduating seniors at the end of the last school year. She said that she found it to be an invaluable project, and intends to repeat it again with both graduating seniors and 8th graders at the end of this school year. She noted that the students' comments helped to identify things that the district is already doing well, as well as areas with room for continuing improvement. She shared comments and presented action steps for maintaining areas about which students were excited, as well as improving upon areas that students indicated needed some improvement. There was a brief discussion regarding a variety of topics touched on in Dr. Levy's report.

REPORTS

Financial Status Updates

Business Manager Garth Sawyer reviewed the financial status report, as well as the cafeteria account report. He reviewed a few changes made since the end-of-year report given in May. He reported that the district ended with approx. \$30,000 surplus in expenditures. Additionally more funds were received than anticipated from excess cost revenues totaling approx. \$73,000. Currently the bottom line surplus amount is approximately \$103,000 prior to the audit.

Ann Monaghan asked if there were any known concerns to be aware of that will impact the budget for 2015-16. Dr. Levy and Mr. Sawyer noted that special education costs will be a concern for 2015-16.

Principals Update

Valley Regional Principal Kristina Martineau provided the Board with an update on the opening of the 2014-15 school year. Based on comments by freshman students, Principal Martineau feels they have made great gains with the transition process for 9th graders. She also noted that this is the first year that students entering Valley will have a full 4 years of work on their Capstone project. There has been, and will continue to be, a lot of outreach to students and parents to ease any anxiety surrounding this requirement.

Principal Martineau also reported to the Board on CAPT results (AP will occur at next meeting as part of profile of graduating class). She noted her observation that the block scheduling has stagnated test results, as measured by CAPT testing, due to the timing of certain subjects and the lack of instruction on certain areas just prior to taking the test. The Administration will be looking at the possibility of adjusting class schedules for the near future. After observing several years of the Block Schedule, she feels that it creates a widespread lack of continuity and equity in instruction time. There was a brief discussion following Principal Martineau's report.

Superintendent Levy shared John Winthrop Middle School Principal, William Duffy's report on the opening of the 2014-15 school year as he was unable to attend tonight's meeting. She shared that it was a good opening with an excellent staff, and all students were in attendance on the first day. The building is in great condition. The summer orientation sessions were a success and most students attended. She also reported that once again John Winthrop has been recognized as a Connecticut Association of Schools Spotlight School. There will be a recognition ceremony held on September 26th @ 7:50 a.m. as part of the monthly school-wide meeting, for any Board members interested in attending.

Dr. Beekley reported to the Board on the Grade 8 Science CMT results. She reminded the Board that there is no cohort data as it is just a snapshot in time, and the State strongly cautions against attempting to create averages over

multiple years as it would be invalid to do so. She reported that they can look at trends, but no comparisons can be made with regards to student growth. She reminded the Board that an action plan was created last year to address the prior years' scores. She reviewed the steps of that plan, and reported that as a result of implementing the action plan, the most recent test scores showed significant progress. The administration is very proud of the science department and the work done by the teachers to implement the factors which aided students and resulted in higher scores. There was a discussion regarding what types of data comparisons can be made based on the types of tests administered. Also discussed were the State Department of Education's recommendations, or cautionary warnings, regarding comparison of data or that type of analysis, across different types of tests.

Committee Reports

Region 4 Audit and Finance Committee - No report given

Joint BOE Finance Committee – No report given.

Joint BOE Policy Committee – No report given, the scheduled Sept. 16th date will be reset.

Joint BOE Curriculum Committees – No report given.

Elaine Fitzgibbons, Region 4 Representative to the LEARN board gave an update on their activities. She reported that she has been attending regularly, and has noticed the growth of magnet schools, which seem to be going against the public school system. She also noted that she's very proud of Region 4, as being on this LEARN board has given her an opportunity to learn about other districts, and to compare how Region 4 is doing alongside other districts.

Supervision District Committee Update - No report given.

Assistant Superintendent's Report

Dr. Beekley gave a general update on Curriculum and Professional Development activities within the districts. She noted that they had one of the best new teacher orientations this year. August 25-27 were devoted to getting staff ready to open schools and covering mandatory yearly statute requirements, as well as providing NWEA training. The NWEA training will continue at the professional development day scheduled for October 13th. She discussed content specific training for teachers who won't be using NWEA. Dr. Beekley noted that the time spent over the last 8-9 years training district teachers on the importance and use of student data is coming to fruition and has positioned the districts to be able to use NWEA to its full potential.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS – none present

The Board moved into Executive Session at 9:00 p.m. for the Superintendent's Presentation of Goals

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

1. Region 4 Regular Meeting (Nov 06, 2014 @ 7:00 p.m.)
2. Presentation of Major Budget Drivers for 2015-16 (Nov.)
3. Profile of 2014 Graduating Class (Nov.)
4. NWEA Update (Nov.)
5. Review Board Committees (Nov.)
6. Discussion on the detail of minutes (Nov.)
7. BOE and Community Input for 2015-16 budget (on-going)
8. BOE Self-evaluation (TBD)

ADJOURNMENT

On motion duly made and seconded the Board unanimously VOTED to adjourn at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jennifer Clark, Secretary
Jennifer Bryan, Clerk