

**BRISTOL WARREN REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
MONDAY, APRIL 23, 2007**

**The monthly meeting of the Bristol Warren Regional School Committee was held on Monday, April 23, 2007, in the cafeteria of Mt. Hope High School, 199 Chestnut Street in Bristol, RI. The Chairperson, William A. Estrella, Jr, called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 PM.**

**Present: William A. Estrella, Jr., Marjorie J. McBride, Paul Silva, William M. O'Dell, Paul E. Brule (arrived 7:15 PM), Diana B. Campbell, David L. Dugan, Karen A. Lynch and John P. Saviano (arrived 7:18 PM); Edward P. Mara, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools; Jane F. Correia, Director of Administration and Finance; and Andrew D. Henneous, Esq., District Solicitor**

**Absent: none**

**Before the opening business, Mr. Estrella asked for a moment of silence and reflection for all those injured or killed in the Virginia Tech incident.**

## **OPENING BUSINESS**

**All present were invited to join in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.**

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Amy Parker, a Byfield parent:**

**“I am a parent at Byfield School. I am here to voice my opinion on the possibility of Byfield no longer having a principal.**

**As a parent, and a former school teacher I am very concerned by this. I am aware in the past Byfield has shared principals, and administrative assistants. That kind of leadership did not work based on speaking with Byfield teachers and parents who were at the school during those years. It was a time of inconsistent, chaotic, part time leadership. When the principal was needed he was not available because he had another school to deal with. When we had an administrative assistant they did not have much authority because they had to run every issue by a principal. There are certain things only a certified principal can do. If there are serious discipline problems the principal is the only one who can suspend a student. A principal is also the only one who can place children in classrooms, and a principal is the only one who can evaluate teachers. We need a principal who's there at all times and can make decisions on the spot. Also, our teachers work very hard to keep their classrooms running smoothly, however they can't assume complete leadership. Problems arise where a principal needs to intervene. Since we have had a full**

**time principal we are a high performing school, and I don't see how it could stay that way in the future if the role is abolished.**

**All of the elementary schools in the district have a full time principal. There are 225 children at Byfield moving around in four buildings. (Byfield, Reynolds, Court House Library and the modular classroom. This is a huge responsibility and liability. We must have a leader overseeing this at all times.**

**Byfield is by far the less fortunate school in the district. Byfield families come from 60 percent of single parent homes. Most of these children are missing a male figure at home, they can't afford to lose authority at school. We also have a huge number of tough custody and divorce situations, and a large amount of contact with DCYF. We are stretched pretty thin dealing with students and families needing social worker or school psychologist help. Principal visibility and availability is a bigger issue than strait number of students in the building. We also uphold the highest rate of free and reduced lunch in the district. We are now Kindergarten through fifth grade just like every other elementary school in town. These students are in need of a principal. We must have equality in each school.**

**As our schools highly perform we still struggle with the high school drop out rate. If we do not give our children a solid foundation of leadership and guidance in elementary school, they will have a difficult time succeeding in the middle and high schools.**

**Another major concern I have is the safety of our children and teachers, especially in this changing world. Our schools need to be a safe place where there is a principal there in a moments notice in**

**case of an emergency situation.**

**With this information I ask you to keep the principal role at Byfield School for the sake of our children and community.”**

**Marie Knapman, a Byfield parent:**

**“My question is why Byfield? Is there a statistic that stands out that makes Byfield the obvious choice not to have a principal. It can't be just because the present principal's contract is up because we know the position is in the budget as it stands.**

**Is it because they have a smaller population by barely 25 kids? This can't be the reason because as everyone knows a couple less kids do not change the situations and problems that arise from a population of K-5. Especially with Byfield's demographics as previously mentioned. So it definitely can't be because these kids are less in need of an authority figure than the other schools.**

**It can't be because it is logistically the easiest school to run. Since coordination has to be done between two schools, a courthouse and a modular classroom. Keeping track of where all those kids are at any given time must be a headache all in itself.**

**Is it because an administrative assistant has the same certifications and authority to suspend troublemakers and place kids in classrooms and evaluate teachers as a principal, no because that is not the case?**

**Is it because a part-time principal that has his or her own school would know our students as well as a principal who is in the building full-time? Would know the parents as well. No, I don't believe that**

could be true either. Is it because Byfield has a teacher that doesn't have a full-time job and therefore could spend some of his or her time administrating. No, I don't think so and if that is the case then why are we paying them a full time teacher's salary?

Is it because the townspeople of Bristol want someone at an administrative level to be laid off? Well, I personally think they do want that but I think they are thinking more of someone one in the administrative building not a principal from an elementary school.

Is it because not having a full time principal would make maintaining a high-performing status easier? Would make kids more prepared to go to Kickemuit with its Dean of Discipline. No I don't think so.

For the life of me, I can't figure it out. No other parent from any other school has the right to say that Byfield will be fine without a principal.

They haven't dealt with that situation and therefore don't know how it will be. Byfield parents did it before and it didn't work. We shared a principal and it didn't work. I don't understand why Byfield is being singled out, I don't understand why we always seem to get the short end of the stick and if that is the case now how will it be when we don't have a principal to represent us.

Is there something we don't know here? Is there some plan set in place that will make sense eventually? I haven't heard anything yet that makes me comfortable with my child attending Byfield next year.

I believe that principal availability and visibility in an elementary school is a top priority and unless someone can come up with a very good reason why that isn't so then I don't believe it would be in the best interest for this school committee to leave an elementary school

**without one.”**

**Karen Binder, a Byfield and Reynolds parent, spoke about the principal. She moved to Bristol from Newport three years ago. The perception in town is changing toward public schools; the schools are improving. However, this short-term decision on the principal will deter families from moving into town. She asked the Committee to use long-term vision in this matter.**

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

**Mrs. Campbell asked to remove item VI. B. Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction’s Report from the consent vote.**

**Mr. Silva motioned to approve the remainder of the consent agenda; Mr. Dugan seconded. The motion passed by a vote of 9 to 0.**

**Mr. Silva motioned to seal the minutes to the March 26 and April 9, 2007 Executive Sessions. Mrs. McBride seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Mr. Estrella introduced, with pleasure, Karen Lynch as the newest member of the School Committee.**

## **BUDGET/FACILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE**

**Mr. O'Dell reported the next meeting is Tuesday, May 8th at 6:00 PM at Oliver to discuss the budget, budget cuts and lay offs. The regular monthly meeting will be Monday, May 21 to present a balanced budget to the full Committee.**

**Recommendation #BF2007-03: That the School Committee, upon the recommendation of the Budget/Facilities Subcommittee, recognize the need to reduce the number of buildings by closing Main Street School on or before June 30, 2008 and ask Administration to give a report at the May Workshop on options and expenses for moving the Technology Department.**

**Mr. O'Dell motioned to approve. Mr. Dugan seconded.**

**MOTION: Mr. O'Dell moved to amend the motion to add, after June 30, 2008, "and send a letter to the Warren Town Council stating the same". Mr. Brule seconded. The motion to amend passed unanimously. It cannot be done this summer because of the telephone communication lines. If possible, the closing will be done sooner than June 2008. The motion to approve the recommendation as amended passed by a vote of 9 to 0.**

## **POLICY/COMMUNITY AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE**

**Mrs. McBride said the next Subcommittee meeting will be Monday, May 7th at 5:30 PM. The agenda will include a review of the**

**fundraising policy. Mr. Estrella asked that any issues with the policy manual be brought to the Chair one week before the meeting. Mrs. McBride added that this included parents, teachers and students. Policy manuals are available at the town halls, libraries, at each school, and at the administration building.**

## **PERSONNEL / CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE**

**Mr. Silva had nothing to report at this time.**

## **CHAIRPERSON'S INITIATIVES**

### **School Committee Issues List**

**Mr. Estrella added Phase II of the Elementary Building Project to the list.**

### **Odyssey of the Mind Competition**

**Funding is needed for the Kickemuit team to compete at the world competition. Dr. Mara has been able to provide \$5,000 because of a savings on kit purchases for Kickemuit which the Collaborative funded. Dr. Mara feels they will be able to participate, compete and win in Chicago. Another \$3,000 of funding is needed; Dr. Mara suggested perhaps the Rotary and Town Councils. Mrs. McBride agreed that funding must be found and suggested the contingency. Mrs. Campbell put an APB out to the Voices for Bristol's Future**

community. Mr. Saviano suggested the School Committee members contribute.

#### **Mt. Hope Home Building Project**

Mr. Estrella reported the project is moving along; the house is off the foundation and to be moved to the lot within the next few days. Interested buyers are welcome to bid.

#### **COLT ANDREWS CONSTRUCTION SUBCOMMITTEE**

Mrs. McBride reported the project is moving right along.

#### **SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATIONS AND ISSUES**

**Recommendation #S 2007-08: Personnel**

**A. BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM:** That the School Committee confirm the recommendation of the Superintendent to appoint the following applicant to the School of the 21st Century, Before and After School Program, as listed below (pending sufficient enrollment to warrant running this program and DCYF CANTS clearance):

**1. Brenda L. Ferreira Child Care Provider (Part Time)**

**Effective: Immediately, for the remainder of the**

**2006-07 school year**

**Reason: To fill a vacancy**

**Funding: Parent Fees/Self-Sufficient**

**B. EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:** That the School Committee confirm the recommendation of the Superintendent to appoint the following applicants to the extracurricular positions listed below for the 2006-07 school year only (pending certification, funding and sufficient sign-ups to warrant running these programs):

**COACHES – MT. HOPE HIGH**

**Sport Position Coach**

- 1. Baseball Asst. Coach Manuel Reis \***
- 2. Lacrosse (Boys) Asst. Coach Justin Teixeira \***

**C. CERTIFIED SUBSTITUTES:** That the School Committee confirm the recommendation of the Superintendent to place on file in the office of the Superintendent the following application for a certified substitute pending satisfactory completion of pre-employment requirements:

**CERTIFIED**

**Name Area/Level**

- 1. Victoria Navarro General Subject Matter**

**D. CLASSIFIED SUBSTITUTES:** That the School Committee confirm the recommendation of the Superintendent to place on file in the

office of the Superintendent the following application for a classified substitute pending satisfactory completion of pre-employment requirements:

## **TEACHER ASSISTANTS**

1. Kathleen E. O'Neill

**E. SUSPENSION, NONRENEWAL AND/OR TERMINATION OF CERTIFIED PERSONNEL:** That the School Committee confirm the recommendation of the Superintendent to rescind the vote(s) of February 13, 2006 as to the following listed teacher and appoint the listed teacher to the position indicated:

### **Name Anticipated Assignment**

1. Susan Castigliero Elementary Teacher (Leave of Absence Vacancy – Extension through the end of the 2006-07 School Year Only)

**F. LEAVE OF ABSENCE:** That the School Committee confirm the recommendation of the Superintendent to grant a leave of absence for a Middle School Special Educator as follows:

1. Renee MacDougall Special Educator – Kickemuit Middle

**Effective:** Upon completion of Maternity Leave through May 22, 2007

**Reason:** Parental leave in accordance with

**Article 21, Section L2 of the Master**

**Agreement**

**G. RESIGNATIONS:** That the School Committee confirm the recommendation of the Superintendent to accept the resignations of Marie N. Cottrell from the position of Elementary Teacher and Lori Prazeres from the position of Middle School Mathematics Teacher as listed below:

**1. Marie N. Cottrell Grade One Teacher - Byfield**

**Effective: End of 2006-07 School Year**

**Reason: Retirement**

**2. Lori Prazeres Mathematics Teacher - Kickemuit Middle**

**Effective: End of 2006-07 School Year**

**Reason: Personal**

**Recommendation #S 2007-09:** That the School Committee, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve a request for home schooling for a first grader, adhering to all requirements as set forth by the Bristol Warren Regional School District.

**Approved in the consent vote.**

**Recommendation #S2007-11:** That the School Committee, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the short-term borrowing of bond anticipation notes for the Colt Andrews Project totaling \$9M.

**Mr. Brule motioned to approve; Mr. O'Dell seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Recommendation #S2007-12: That the School Committee, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the bonding for the Hugh Cole Project totaling \$8.9M.**

**Mrs. McBride motioned to approve; Mr. Brule seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Recommendation #S2007-13: That the School Committee, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the 2007-2008 Student Calendar.**

**Dr. Mara asked to table this recommendation in order to include another professional development day. In response to Mr. O'Dell, Dr. Mara explained that the Commissioner no longer allows staggered start days for the high school (which allowed 9th graders one day at school before the 10 – 12 graders start).**

**Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction's Report**

**Mr. Silva, seconded by Mrs. McBride, motioned to accept the Assistant Superintendent's report.**

**Mrs. Campbell asked for more information about the appeal to RIDE on an accountability designation. Dr. Mara explained we are considering an appeal on Kickemuit's designation as High Performing with Caution; the area in question is 7th SPED ELA, and**

the missed target could be by one student. The High Performing status will not change. Mrs. Campbell congratulated the District on the PRIMES grant of \$78,891.66; she applauded the efforts to promote technology, especially for females. Mrs. Campbell is also excited about the possibility of \$381,945 in funding for a three year period. Dr. Mara gave the credit to Mrs. Thies, Kickemuit and Mt. Hope. He reminded the public, however, that the more money we bring in through grants, the higher our per pupil cost goes. The grant is used to fund materials, new math programs and expanding course offerings at the high school. Mr. Estrella asked Dr. Mara, in his next newsletter, to convey congratulations from the School Committee to those who participated.

The motion to accept the Assistant Superintendent's Report passed unanimously.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION - 7:42 PM**

In accordance with Open Meeting Laws 42-46-5(a)(1)-(9), 2(b), Mr. Silva motioned to go into Executive Session at 7:42 PM for legal advice regarding the Administrator Contract Language and discussion of the Superintendent's evaluation results. Mr. Brule seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Estrella announced that no action will be taken when the regular session is resumed.

#### **RESUMPTION OF MEETING – 8:21 PM**

**Discussed in Executive Session were the topics mentioned above.**

**ADJOURNMENT – 8:22 PM**

**There being no further business to discuss, Mrs. Campbell, seconded by Mrs. McBride, motioned to adjourn at 8:22 PM. The vote was unanimous.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Paul Silva, Secretary**

**/ca**