

**BRISTOL WARREN REGIONAL
SPECIAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MONDAY, JANUARY 4, 2010**

A special meeting of the Bristol Warren Regional School Committee was held on Monday, January 4, 2010, in the Oliver Administration Building at 151 State Street in Bristol, RI. The Chairperson, Paul Silva, called the meeting to order at approximately 6:13 PM.

Present: Paul Silva, Chair, Paul E. Brule, Vice-Chair, William M. O'Dell, Treasurer, Marjorie J. McBride, Secretary, Denise R. Arsenault, John C. Bento, Diana B. Campbell, Karen A. Lynch and John P. Saviano; Melinda L. Thies, Superintendent; Mario Andrade, Assistant Superintendent; Leslie J. Anderson, Director of Pupil Personnel Services; and Mary N. Almeida, Director of Literacy and Title I

Absent: none

SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation # S2010-01: That the School Committee, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, authorize the Bristol Warren Regional School District to enter into a Memorandum of

Understanding with the Rhode Island Department of Education in regard to the “Race to the Top” grant application.

MOTION: Mr. Saviano motioned to approve; Mrs. Campbell seconded.

Mr. Silva stated this special meeting was needed because of the deadline to submit our application by January 8th. Mrs. Thies explained that Commissioner Gist has applied for \$100M in Federal “Race to the Top” (R2T) funds. Some of the less successful school districts, such as Providence and Central Falls, are in need of support and are required to participate; \$50M is earmarked for those districts. \$50M is for the next level of participation; Bristol Warren has a significant level of need because of Title I, but we will be ineligible for some levels of participation. Signatures of the Superintendent, School Committee Chair, Teachers’ Union President and the Commissioner are needed. The union has met with the Commission and has asked for some language modifications. Mrs. Thies feels the State is well-positioned to receive these funds and Bristol Warren should participate. Rhode Island is one of seven states that have moved to the next level of participation. There is concern on what the responsibility is going to be once we sign and the repercussions to participation. The Committee expressed concerns of unfunded mandates, or having to spend \$50,000 to receive \$10,000. There is a withdrawal option until January 13 at 9:00 AM.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mrs. Thies explained

we get to choose which elements we wish to participate in; the elements that she had designated as TBD will be decided internally, mostly likely to end up as a no. No union will sign this MOU and Mrs. Thies will speak with Linda LaClair.

A board of participants will determine target achievement. The District can choose individual elements for participation and will develop our own action plan which must align with our Strategic Plan and must be approved by the Commissioner. Mrs. Thies and Dr. Andrade have had a great deal of discussion and have been very judicious to be sure it will serve our needs. The Commissioner has said it would be viewed favorably on the Federal level if we have union support. We have guarantees it will not supplant other funding sources. There are no details available yet on State funding. Bristol Warren is well-regarded in the State in terms of teachers and programs and we will need to be discriminating in the pieces in which we want to participate.

The money would be restricted and would come over a four-year time period; it will help us continue the good work we are doing. Mrs. Thies feels it is time to review our evaluation system in Bristol Warren; she will want input from the entire union, not just the president. The Commission has met with union leadership twice; language differences have not yet been resolved. Mrs. Thies is interested in how the State will approach the evaluation piece; do we want to be part of the designers or just mandated. She will be

attending a review session. She does not think the funds they attach to the plan will be insufficient; we have the ability to craft a plan that can be afforded with the amount of money we receive. We cannot back out once into the plan so we must choose very carefully.

The motion to approve passed by a vote of 9 to 0.

ADJOURNMENT – 6:30 PM

There being no further business to discuss, Mrs. McBride, seconded by Mr. Saviano, motioned to adjourn at 6:47 PM. The motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Marjorie J. McBride, Secretary

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