

**BRISTOL WARREN REGIONAL
SCHOOL COMMITTEE WORKSHOP
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2011**

The bi-monthly meeting of the Bristol Warren Regional School Committee was held on Monday, February 14, 2011, in the cafeteria of Mt. Hope High School, 199 Chestnut Street in Bristol, RI. The Chairperson, John C. Bento, called the meeting to order at approximately 7:07 PM.

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

Absent: Marjorie J. McBride

OPENING BUSINESS

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

PUBLIC COMMENT / PUBLIC FORUM

None

SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATIONS

S2011-4 A-D: CONSENT AGENDA – PERSONNEL

A. SUSPENSION, NON-RENEWAL AND/OR TERMINATION OF CERTIFIED PERSONNEL: Based on the uncertainty of sufficient Federal, State and local funding for general and categorical programs for the 2011-12 school year, and program reductions, consolidation of classes, re-alignment of staff and elimination of positions to more efficiently and effectively use the school system's assets and to meet the needs of students, the Superintendent recommends to the School Committee the termination/ non-renewal of the following listed personnel effective the last day of the 2010-11 school year:

[50 Certified Staff]

B. SUSPENSION, NON-RENEWAL AND/OR TERMINATION OF CERTIFIED PERSONNEL: The Superintendent recommends to the School Committee the termination/non-renewal, effective the end of current assignment and/or the last day of the 2010-11 school year, whichever occurs first, of the following listed teachers due to the return of teachers from leaves of absence and/or the non-renewal of the limited contracts:

[2 Certified Staff]

C. SUSPENSION, NON-RENEWAL AND/OR TERMINATION OF CERTIFIED PERSONNEL: The Superintendent recommends to the School Committee the termination/non-renewal, effective the last day of the 2010-11 school year, of the following listed teachers due to their lack of permanent certification in the required area and/or the non-renewal of the limited contracts:

[1 Certified Staff]

D. SUSPENSION, NON-RENEWAL AND/OR TERMINATION OF CERTIFIED PERSONNEL: Based on the Superintendent's belief that there exists more qualified teachers available for their positions and/or teachers who are a better fit for the District, the Superintendent recommends to the School Committee the termination/non-renewal of the following listed non-tenured personnel effective the last day of the 2010-11 school year:

[1 Certified Staff]

MOTION: Mr. Silva, seconded by Mr. Saviano, motioned to approve.

Mrs. Arsenault, meaning no disrespect to the Superintendent, made the following comment:

“This list represents many fine (including some of our finest and most effective teachers. To approve terminating their employment, even if it is a potential as opposed to final decision, is inconceivable to me. Though this practice of issuing “pink slips” is an annual event to some degree, dictated by contractual and state law, it remains, in my view, a demoralizing and disrespectful means of managing our fiscal responsibilities.

Furthermore, I believe it does much harm at a time when we are pursuing the best educational outcomes for our students. In the current financial climate, we find ourselves wondering where our funding will come from, how to preserve what is excellent and how to maximize all our resources. Among these teachers are valuable resources!

The challenge must be taken to the people of Bristol and Warren and our leadership at the local and state level, not to the employee pool. To try to maintain excellence in some areas and improve in others we need the majority of people on this list. In the event that we are able to rehire them for the 2011-12 school year, when funding is settled, we will be fortunate. Should some decide to seek more secure employment elsewhere, upon receipt of these notices, our students will suffer from the loss.

Legal or not, this practice is destructive. I will continue to vote against such recommendations, and suggest to my colleagues that we find new and creative ways to communicate and secure the financial needs of this school system. Should that prove a dead end, we must challenge ourselves to make radical cuts to the budget, which do not remove teachers from classrooms and programs from kids. Thank-you.”

Mr. O’Dell stated he generally feels compelled to join the rebellion and vote against this; although he understands the reason for taking these actions, there needs to be discussions among the key players to find a better way to do business. He believes the time has come to make a stand and look for a better way.

Mrs. Thies, for the record, said she does not disagree with her colleagues; her professional organization and lobbyist have been working diligently with the General Assembly to roll back the March 1st date of notification of lay-offs; all attempts to date have been unsuccessful; work will continue; we will abide by RI General Law.

Mr. Saviano said no school committee is happy about doing this; it is the teachers and students who get hurt; concerns need to be directed to union people in the legislature.

Mr. Silva agrees with everything stated but we must abide by the law

whether we like it or not and must be concerned about the ramifications; these notices hurt some of our wonderful staff members and students, but if we do not do this, the hurt could be greater. Mr. Silva agrees that the people who represent the unions in the legislature are in the best position to make changes.

The motion to approve passed by a vote of 6 to 2 with Mrs. Arsenault and Mr. O'Dell opposed.

CHAIRPERSON'S INITIATIVES

School Committee Goals

Mr. Bento asked the Committee to accept the current goals revision as a draft until a retreat with a facilitator can be scheduled, perhaps in August.

MOTION: Mr. Saviano motioned to accept the goals revision as a draft; Mrs. Campbell seconded. The motion passed by a vote of 8 to 0.

March 2011 as Youth Art Month

Mrs. Thies heartily supports the acknowledgement of the arts, having two sons in the art field; we are proud of our art program and art provides an interesting and creative way to solve life problems; it is important to acknowledge the arts 52 weeks a year.

Wellness Week – Week of March 21, 2011

Mrs. Campbell, Chair of the District’s Wellness Committee, requested the School Committee declare the week of March 21 as Wellness Week across the District. The Wellness Committee would like to work with principals, teachers and parents to highlight healthy choices, good nutrition and a healthy lifestyle and plan to give accolades to those who have made special efforts in this initiative.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None necessary.

ADJOURNMENT – 7:24 PM

MOTION: There being no further business to discuss, Mr. Bento wished everyone a Happy Valentine’s Day and Mrs. Campbell, seconded by Mrs. Arsenault, motioned to adjourn at 7:24 PM. The motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen A. Lynch, Secretary

/c