

**BRISTOL WARREN REGIONAL
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2013**

The bi-monthly meeting of the Bristol Warren Regional School Committee was held on Wednesday, February 20, 2013, in the cafeteria of Mt. Hope High School, 199 Chestnut Street in Bristol, RI. The Chairperson, Paul Silva, called the meeting to order at approximately 7:04 PM.

Present: Paul Silva, Chair; John Bento, Vice-Chair (8:13 p.m.); Susan Rancourt, Treasurer; Marjorie McBride, William O'Dell (8:56 p.m.), John P. Saviano and Lynn Wainwright; Melinda Thies, Superintendent; Mary Almeida, Director of Literacy; Leslie Anderson, Director of Pupil Personnel; and Pauline Silva, Director of Administration

Absent: Karen Lynch, Secretary, Diana Campbell, and Mario Andrade, Asst. Superintendent

OPENING BUSINESS

All present were invited to recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

PUBLIC COMMENT/PUBLIC FORUM

Before Alexandra Wetherald spoke, Mr. Silva reminded everyone that the subject matter requested to be discussed on the public comment form concerning a particular staff member, the School Committee is not at liberty to talk about without written notice being sent to that staff member. Alexandra replied that she understands that and they just wanted to make a statement about Ms. Bean before the layoff vote takes place. Alexandra began by saying those students present this evening are only a small portion of the many students who support Ms. Bean stating she is one of the few teachers who stays after to work with a student if they don't understand a concept. She drives her students to learn and apply knowledge. She works with Save the Bay and often takes students along to be a part of that experience. The students would be disappointed to see Ms. Bean leave the school and are requesting that the school committee meet again to reconsider not going through with her layoff.

Mr. Silva stated that in years past, he has seen layoff notices reach three digit numbers. This year it is less than past years at 58. Even still, he stated this is not a task we enjoy as school committee members, but we don't have a choice given the state of the budget and the economy. Most of those laid off have an opportunity to come back or reapply for positions again. It is my hope that if funding comes through, these people would be able to come back to work for the district. Mrs. McBride, addressing legislators, would like to have the layoffs done in June when the school districts know what their budget will be so that we aren't putting students, parents and

teachers through the stress that is created because the law requires layoff notices to go out by March 1st. She urged everyone to contact their legislators concerning this as she wants to see this change.

SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATIONS AND ISSUES

CONSENT AGENDA PERSONNEL: S2013-06 A-C:

MOTION: Mr. Saviano made a motion to approve Superintendent's Recommendation Personnel: Layoffs/Notices of Non-renewals #S2013-06 A-C; Mrs. Rancourt seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA FOCUS

Mr. Silva stated that the Focus Groups/Perkins Planning Grant Discussion will be placed on our next agenda to accommodate the school committee member who requested additional information regarding the focus groups, but was unable to attend this evening's meeting.

Overview of FY14 Budget Presentation

Mrs. Thies began her presentation by explaining that typically, in the past, we have one or two meetings with the Joint Finance Committee where a lot of information is disseminated. She stated that behind

hardline figures, there is a story leading up to it. The district felt a better way to parse out this information to the public would be to develop a budget narrative which Mrs. Thies will present this evening.

Tomorrow evening there will be a Budget Subcommittee Meeting which will be an open forum where town officials from Bristol and Warren have been invited to join the discussion. At that meeting there will be a more concrete demonstration of what the budget proposal is. On February 25th, the school committee will vote in regard to the budget. Mrs. Thies reiterated this is a long range plan that protects the district as well as both towns. The long term implications and ramifications will show the district's good stewardship as well as the relationship with both of the towns.

The following items highlight Mrs. Thies presentation:

Funding Formula – In 2010, the General Assembly enacted the funding formula where we will realize a \$704,504 reduction in state revenue every year from FY11-FY20 . Mrs. Thies stated this is why we felt it important to develop a long range plan. The vision of the district has always been to streamline without negatively effecting student outcomes. This is an ongoing cycle of improvement where we constantly have to look at our outcomes to see if we are getting the results we need to assess any that aren't working.

Protection Plan - Fiscal and Human Resources When working with fiscal and human resources, the district looks at 1) shared

efficiencies; 2) realization that sacrifices are needed; 3) streamlining and program redesign which is a better and more efficient way to deliver quality education. The following resources that helped the district develop these efficiencies were Inter-Local Trust, statewide transportation, statewide food services and statewide school supply vendor. In regard to sacrifices, we have had two voluntary administrative salary freezes; we have ratified two contracts which were major concessionary contracts. From 2007-2013 there has been a reduction in administrative, certified and non-certified full-time employees which in part is due to enrollment decline at the middle and high school level which was projected for all school levels and follows the trend of the state, but at Bristol Warren, there has been an increase in enrollment at the elementary level. The district was compelled to streamline the budget due to the funding formula with elimination of personnel, but with the redesign of those departments. The following savings were realized as a result of streamlining: FY11: Savings \$753,000; FY12: Savings \$850,000; FY13: Savings \$1,100,000. (The larger amount of savings for FY13 is due to the ratification of both contracts which also impacted our budget with considerable savings.) Mrs. Thies emphasized that even with the elimination of some human capital, we consolidated programs, but they still exist. Mrs. Thies feels the district has designed better and more efficient systems.

Looking forward to FY14, there will be less streamlining and more redesign and reallocation. Mrs. Thies highlighted those areas which

will include expansion of technology hardware over a three year phase for grades 3, 4 and 5; expansion of MAC lab graphic design; creation of CTE (visual communication and design). For FY14 our budget request will be less than last year. Mrs. Thies commended Mrs. Silva for the wonderful job she has done in her conservative planning and budgeting which has prepared the district for the future as well as protect our towns. Our savings for FY14 has not been determined yet and will be part of the conversation at tomorrow night's subcommittee meeting.

FY15 streamlining to be determined with the following projected redesign: expansion of technology, grade 4; expansion of STEM program; International Studies Program. Savings to be determined.

FY16 streamlining to be determined with the following projected redesign: expansion of technology, grade 5; expansion of STEM program; International Studies Program. Savings to be determined.

Mrs. Silva highlighted the following concerning revenues for the district:

FY11 local revenue received – 2.0% - approximately \$607,579; state revenue received (4.73%) - reduction of over \$878,000; net of -\$270,534

FY12 local revenue received – 5.38% increase from the towns; state

revenue received 5.08% (due to non-budgeted Categorical Aid)

FY13 local revenue received – 2.25% - \$333,000; state revenue received (4.15%) – reduction of \$788,000.

Mrs. Thies closed by restating that this is a five year plan meant to be transparent with a clear vision for measuring student outcomes utilizing open and innovative practices. Mrs. Silva stated that we believe the children are better served as we reassess, reanalyze and move forward financially. The district is educationally sound today and for the future.

Mr. Saviano asked if the budget reflects the amount we are awaiting from the town of Warren. Mrs. Silva said the budget does include that revenue. Mrs. McBride commented that she liked the way this budget was delivered this evening and would like to see the Joint Finance Committee get a copy of the Powerpoint presentation. Mr. Silva expressed a concern on being careful how far we cut back in the future. He thanked everyone for their efforts and felt it was a good presentation. Mr. Saviano recently attended the Rhode Island Association of School Committees seminar and it was noted by a couple of districts in the state that our credit recovery and afterschool programs are outstanding and that some will be modeling after ours.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Silva commended the MHHS Robotics team who will be receiving accolades at our next meeting for their recent achievement at competitions in Massachusetts and New York and mentioned how well they placed in the recent competition in Rhode Island. They are now qualified for the third year in a row to go to the world competition in St. Louis. Mr. Silva said we should be proud as a school committee and district, and he recognized Ryan Garrity for the phenomenal job he has done with those students.

Mrs. Wainwright would like addressed at a future meeting how the high school plans to avoid drop outs and students who are not graduating. Mrs. Thies will explain the process of the new criteria for graduating at the March workshop. Mr. Saviano asked Mrs. Thies if some of the difficulty with test scores in math is due to Chicago math. Mrs. Thies responded that she did not believe that was the case. She stated that students are being taught to the standard and teachers are doing everything possible to help students meet that standard.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – 8:12 PM

Mr. Silva stated for the record that an executive session is being called pursuant to Open Meeting Laws 42-46-5(a)(1)(7) for the following: First year administrator contract discussion; district organizational chart; FY14 Budget

All parties to be discussed have been notified in advance. No action will be taken during this meeting, and we will only be returning to adjourn.

MOTION: Mr. Saviano made a motion to go into executive session at 8:12 p.m.; Mrs. Rancourt seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

(Mr. Bento arrived at 8:13 p.m.)

(Mr. O'Dell arrived at 8:56 p.m.)

MOTION: At 9:16 p.m. Mr. O'Dell motioned to end the executive session; Mr. Bento seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT – 9:17 PM

MOTION: At 9:17 PM Mr. Saviano motioned to adjourn; Mr. Bento seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen A. Lynch, Secretary

/kd