

Minutes of the East Greenwich School Committee

Tuesday, December 16, 2014

Archie R. Cole Middle School Library

100 Cedar Avenue

East Greenwich, RI 02818

Those in attendance were Ms. Carolyn Mark, Chair; Dr. Deidre Gifford, Vice-Chair; Mrs. Mary Ellen Winters; Mr. Clark Smith; Dr. Yan Sun; Mr. Michael Fain, and Mr. David Osborne. Dr. Victor Mercurio, Superintendent; Mrs. Gail Wilcox, Director of Administration; and Mr. Brad Wilson, Director of Student Service were also in attendance.

7:00 p.m. Regular Meeting

I. Call to Order

Ms. Mark called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

The meeting commenced with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

III. Recognitions

- a. EGHS Junior All-State Band, Orchestra, and Mixed Choir members**
- b. EGHS Senior All-State Band, Orchestra, and Women's Chorus members**
- c. Cole Junior All-State Orchestra, Chorus, and Band**

The Committee recognized and congratulated all for their outstanding achievement.

IV. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

V. Approval of Minutes

a. Regular for December 2, 2014

On a motion by Mrs. Winters, which was seconded by Mr. Fain, the Committee voted 6-0 to approve the minutes. Dr. Sun abstained.

VI. Superintendent's Report

Last week Dr. Mercurio attended a recognition ceremony at the state house for Rhode Island schools designated as "commended." Mr. Podraza and Mrs. Meyer accepted citations for their schools. Dr. Mercurio also thanked Representative Giarrusso. Last night, a joint pre-budget meeting took place with the Town Council and School Committee, as required by state statute. The next joint pre-budget meeting is tentatively scheduled for January 12, 2015, but will be confirmed with Mr. Coyle.

VII. School Committee Concerns

Ms. Mark would like the Policy Committee to draft policy that outlines protocol for School Committee meetings. This policy will include open meeting protocol and rules of engagement for public participation. The goal is to make members of the public feel welcome to attend, while outlining procedures for effective and productive participation. Smithfield School District has a policy, which could be used as a template. The policy can then be available at meetings and/or online. Ms. Mark also asked Dr. Mercurio to research options for video taping School Committee meetings for the public. Ms. Mark also asked the Policy Committee to review the School Committee By-Laws, which need updating.

VIII. Action Items

a. Parental leave-Kelli O'Neill, Teacher, Cole

On a motion by Mrs. Winters, which was seconded by Mr. Fain, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve the parental leave extension.

b. Field Trip-EGHS Ski Club-Sunday River, Maine- 2/27/15-3/1/15

On a motion by Mrs. Winters, which was seconded by Mr. Smith, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve the field trip.

c. School Committee Meeting Dates for 2015

Mrs. Winters made a motion to approve the meeting dates. Mr. Fain seconded the motion. Dr. Gifford asked if one of the regular January meetings (either the 6th or the 20th) could be eliminated and piggybacked with the joint pre-budget meeting with the Town Council on January 12, 2015. Dr. Mercurio will check to see if space is available at Swift. The School Committee Meeting Dates for 2015 were approved 7-0 with the notation of deleting one meeting in January and combining a regular meeting with the joint meeting on January 12, 2015.

IX. Discussion

a. Program of Studies EGHS 2015-16

Ms. Mark asked if the Committee had additional items that need clarification.

Dr. Sun asked Mr. Podraza clarifying questions regarding on-line courses, credit, and GPA. Mr. Podraza explained the process for awarding credit and GPA for independent on-line studies. Mr. Fain questioned the process for course offerings and asked if a formal process could be offered to see what students are looking for in each content area. Members of the audience (Mr. Zhang, Ms. Lukens, and

Mr. Yu) asked questions regarding on-line courses (GPA and credit) and the timeline for receiving schedules for the upcoming school year. Mr. Podraza will clarify the process for credit and GPA for on-line courses. Mr. Podraza noted that students' have been receiving schedules for the upcoming year before the school year ends and while guidance counselors are still at school.

b. Feasibility Study Report for All Day Kindergarten at Frenchtown and Meadowbrook

This report is posted on the district website with links to the presentation and summary of responses. Dr. Mercurio reported on the findings of the Ad Hoc Kindergarten Committee. Mr. Osborne asked if the report could include links to the Common Core State Standards and if the committee could provide information on the current kindergarten program for comparison (current population, costs, etc.) He also asked if the recommended retrofits could be completed by September. Dr. Mercurio said Strategic Business Solutions (SBS) could complete the project prior to the start of school. The bidding process would take place between now and late January/February. The hiring process is complicated because it can't take place until the FTM. Budget owners are currently drafting projected budgets, which will include and exclude all day kindergarten. If the budget is adopted on March 3, 2015 with a recommendation for all day kindergarten, community members will not have final approval until the FTM. Dr. Mercurio noted the Committee needs to choose an option (if any) for all day kindergarten, so budget dollars can be appropriated. He cautioned

there is not a lot of latitude in the budget so items need to be prioritized. Dr. Mercurio will check to see if any funds are left from the \$10,000 grant used for the facilities study. Dr. Mercurio explained the process of applying to RIDE for grant money to assist with all day kindergarten and noted an application can be made without taking formal action on a decision. Mrs. Winters asked if the Committee could ask the town for assistance. Mr. Fain asked if other options for all day kindergarten could be explored (i.e. cut itinerant classes for kindergarten, paraprofessionals, etc.). Dr. Mercurio and Mr. Marcaccio explained the parameters of full day kindergarten noting contractual obligations. Diane Daigle, community member, asked questions regarding the hiring process, requirements for paraprofessionals, grants, staggering lunch, and recess costs. Dr. Mercurio noted the decision to hire paraprofessionals was made years prior to his tenure, but is a solid educational decision.

X. Updates

a. Ad Hoc Committees

1. Study Start Times

The committee will meet in January to look at survey results and plan the next public forum.

2. Academic Calendar

The meeting that was scheduled for December 22, 2014 will be postponed until after the December break.

XI. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Fain, which was seconded by Dr. Sun, the Committee voted 7-0 to adjourn at 9:28 p.m.

CHRISTINE DIMEGLIO
SECRETARY