

WILLIAM M. DAVIES, JR. CAREER AND TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL
50 Jenckes Hill Road, Lincoln, RI 02865

Board of Trustees

Minutes of the Regular Meeting

Wednesday, December 12, 2007

Minutes were accepted at the 1/9/08 Board meeting with the amendment found on Page 7.

I. Routine

A. **Call Meeting to Order**

At 5:09 pm, Dr. Segovis called the meeting to order.

B. **Roll Call of the Board**

Davies' Executive Assistant called the roll of the Board.

Members Present: Richard Beaupre; James Bone; Raymond Chartier; V. Michael Ferdinandi; John Gregory; Robert Halkyard; Carolyn Kyle, *Vice-Chairperson*; John Nardolillo; John Quinn; Dr. James Segovis, *Chairperson*; Robin Smith

Members Absent: Larry Gemma

Others Present: Victoria A. Gailliard-Garrick, Cheryl Carroll, Bernie Blumenthal, Gerry Manning, Susan Paquin, Fred Slemmon, Joanne Andrews, Adrienne Noelte, Frank Barcellos, Jerry Egan

C. **Approval of Minutes** – October 3 and November 7, 2007 Regular Session Minutes
Mr. Gregory made a motion to accept the Regular Session minutes of the October 3 and November 7, 2007 meetings, Mrs. Smith seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

D. **Recess to Executive Session Pursuant to R.I.G.L. 42.46-5 (A) (1) and (2) to Discuss Pending Litigation and Personnel Issues**

Deferred recess into Executive Session until the end of the meeting

E. **Return to Regular Session**

Did not recess out of Regular Session at this point on the agenda.

F. **Opportunity for Audience to Comment**

No comments were made.

II. Business Agenda

A. **Finance Report** –Cheryl Carroll, Business Office Coordinator
Report was given in Executive Session.

- B. **Human Resources Report** - *Joanne Andrews, Human Resources Coordinator*
There are a few openings due to three December retirements: Bernadette Andrews, Cyndi Ginish-Hundertmark, Deborah Moran. The openings we have are for Diagnostic Prescriptive Teacher, Special Education Teacher, and Physical Education/Health Teacher.
- C. **Approve Davies Graduation by Proficiency Appeals Process** – *Judy Valentine, Supervisor of Academic Instruction*
(*See Supplemental Material: “Graduation by Proficiency Appeals Process Draft”*)
Ms. Valentine distributed this document at the last Board meeting for the trustees to review and bring back any concerns/questions/additions/deletions to this meeting so they could vote to approve it.

On the first page is a short overview of the requirements for Davies students to graduate based on Davies requirements and the Graduation by Proficiency requirements of the Commissioner’s Review. State Assessments are also part of the graduation requirement as well as the Electronic Graduation Portfolio and Senior Exhibition Project. There is also a piece on transfer students: what we will accept and what we will not accept from their sending school’s portfolio. The appeals process is covered on the last two pages of the document. If a parent feels his/her son or daughter’s graduation decision is not valid, they have the right to appeal the decision. The parents will have to write a brief statement to the School-Based Appeals Committee explaining why their son or daughter does deserve to graduate.

Education hearings have two levels. At the first level, parents plead their case to the Director. The director then makes a decision. If they do not accept that decision, they then can go to the next level with the Commissioner of Education. With this graduation appeals process, two levels were added. The School-based Appeals Committee was added because they are familiar with the high school regulations and what the criteria is to meet that. Then there is the director’s level, the Board of Trustees level, and then they can go to the Commissioner.

Every school is being required to put together an appeals process due to the changes in graduation. Parents have the right to make sure we are looking at every student fairly, equally, and unbiasedly. If they find there is something we denied their child for graduation, which could be a part of any of the requirements, they will have to prove it to the Appeals Committee. The last page of the document is the “Petition to Review Board” form where the committee will record their recommendations and the Board will have the opportunity to agree with them or not. It is very, very important this appeals process is uniform for every student whether it is an ELL student, regular ed., or special ed.

The Commissioner’s Office called regarding the Fall Commissioner’s Review and they want to meet with the Director. There are a couple of things they need clarification on regarding assessments. Hopefully, if that goes well, then we will be one of the schools able to award a Regents’ diploma. That is what we have been working so hard toward.

Mr. Quinn had a question about where in the policy it mentions the district-based appeals committee. That is the Board of Trustees level because school districts

across the state will have a School Committee level and Davies Board is considered a school committee.

The language will be changed to Board of Trustees/District Appeals Committee along with a definition and what the Board's role will be (challenging bias and procedure, whether the Board will support the Director's decision or not).

Every school will be required to have an appeals process. It is the graduation requirement that will differ. It varies from school to school. Within the four core subject curricula, Math, English, Social Studies, and Science, there are grade span expectations, the minimum level of proficiency which happens to be set at grade 10. Anything beyond that is distinction. The teachers have to make sure that whatever they are teaching in those courses is aligned to those expectations. How they go about doing that is up to the school or the district, and how they measure that is up to the school or the district. There are a lot of different measures they can use. They can use an exam as one of the measures for proficiency. They can use the portfolio like we are using, the senior project with the research paper and the final product that we are using. Some schools are using extended tasks similar to a senior project, but it varies. The only standardized testing you will see is the State Assessment Testing (NECAP), an assessment of those core content areas.

The Carnegie Units are the number of credits in each core content area and technical area. The state just changed the number of required credits in science and mathematics. It used to be two for science and two for math. Now it is four in math and three in science. They are looking to increase the number from two to three in social studies.

Mr. Quinn was still uncomfortable with the way the policy was written. There is still no role delineation for the Board of Trustees Appeals Committee. It says that all decisions of the Director-based Appeals Committee are final. So if that is the end of the road, then what is the role of the Board? He feels the language needs to be cleaned up.

Dr. Segovis asked for a motion to defer the vote to approve the Graduation by Proficiency Appeals Process until the suggested revisions are made to the document; Mr. Quinn made the motion; Mr. Gregory seconded it; all were in favor.

III. Informational Time/Program Updates

A. Director's Report

1) Teachers' Association – Frank Barcellos, President of the Davies Teachers' Association

For the new Board members, Mrs. Gailliard-Garrick introduced Fred Slemmon, the new Coordinator of Special Populations who replaced Vicki Phelps; Gerry Manning, Supervisor of Technical Instruction who replaced Brian Butler; in the audience, Jerry Egan, the NEA uniserv; Frank Barcellos, Davies Teachers' Association President; and Adrienne Noelte, Davies Teachers' Association Vice-President.

Mr. Barcellos welcomed the new Board members. He also thanked Mrs. Gailliard-Garrick and her entire management team. This past Monday the staff had a little holiday get-together at the Cantina DiMarco. This is something that hasn't been done for a while with the association in concert with the administration. It was a joint venture and hopefully we can continue to do that.

He then informed the Board US News and World Report had a state by state listing of the top high schools in the country awarded for academic enrollment. In RI, there were only five high schools awarded Gold, Silver, and Bronze awards and Davies was on that list receiving a Bronze.

Mr. Egan than welcomed the new members of the Board and wished everyone happy holidays. He extended Lynn Tait, President of the Davies Teaching Assistants' Association's, greetings because she was unable to be present. It is always a pleasure for him to be at Davies. The leadership that the Director/Principal has given at Davies is a breath of fresh air. She and her team have worked with both unions in such an outstanding manner. He works throughout the state and some places it is very adversarial and some places it isn't and Davies is one of those places. It has been a pleasure to work with the two unions and the leadership here at Davies under Director/Principal Victoria Gailliard-Garrick.

The collaboration is important especially during these times. It is critical that we work together to try to come up with resolutions for students, faculty, and staff and obviously the Board is an important part of that too.

Dr. Segovis thanked Mr. Egan for his kind words. He appreciates the partnership as well.

- 2) **Teacher Assistants' Association**-Lynn Tait-Romano, President
No report
- 3) **Future Student Night – Nov. 27, 2007** – Victoria A. Gailliard-Garrick, Director
This is the evening we welcome prospective students within our sending districts, Lincoln, North Providence, Smithfield, Pawtucket, Central Falls, and Providence. She is proud to say on one hand, we had 983 students and their parents come into this building on that night. It was very, very successful. We made some changes in the program over the last few years that have been working very well. We do a quick opening remark giving them an overview/history of the school. We talk about our programming, performance classification, support personnel, administration, and teaching staff. The majority of the time is spent on parents visiting the shops. To have 983 people come through the doors is something to be proud of. It is a wonderful feeling to realize that people are finally looking at this school as a wonderful school to attend.

On the other hand, she has many parents say to her, "We go through this process; my kids meet the requirements; they meet the academic and reading criteria, but we can't get in." Out of that 983, the highest we have had over the last six years, on an average there may be 300-400 students that meet the criteria; we can only accept 225 students. We need to look at our strategic planning, how we are going

to accommodate those other students who are not getting accepted. We are turning them away, and if we don't take them in now, we are not going to get them as upper classmen. Although we go through the waiting list, we are not reaching all the students that want to be here. She has a couple of ideas. One idea is a new annex because the old one is falling apart. She was looking forward to the new addition with the School for the Deaf's relocation plans, but that fell through.

Dr. Segovis said we need to start getting the word out that we need a better facility before it gets to a point where we are playing catch up with the repairs that are needed. The Met School seems to get a lot of resources. They have a new investment, a new expansion. We need to strategize what we are going to do.

4) **Enrollment Data**– *Victoria A. Gailliard-Garrick, Director*

Since last year, we have had concerns about the declining enrollment over the course of the school year. Looking at September's data in comparison to December 1st data, we haven't lost a lot of 9th graders. We started out in September with 250; we are down to 237 right now. With Grade 10, we started out with 241; we are down to 224. This is our greatest loss and the reason for that is we take in maybe 25-30 new 10th graders every year to balance the kids who have repeated the 9th grade. That is where our problem is; it is with Grade 9. What happens is they get here in 10th grade and start missing their friends and end up leaving saying, "It is not the right fit for me; it is not what I thought." With Grade 11, we started out with 170; we are down five students, and the senior class, we started out with 150. We are down to 149.

She is going through these numbers because she is currently looking at that current 9th grade programs, and why we are not retaining so many kids. Last year she told the board that we were looking at some new program designs to try to keep the kids interested in the school, acclimated to the point that it is not just a hands-on school especially with the 9th graders. They have one period of shop exploration and the other 6 periods are academic. We do a lot of ramping up because of the grade equivalent that they are coming in with. Admissions requirement is only 6th grade reading level and a 5th grade math level. So we have to look at what we are doing in the 9th grade program and making their transition a lot easier so they can move on to Grade 10 and hopefully keep them here.

To do this, we designed two programs. We have a 9th Grade House with two teams. They are working with the students on acclimating them to the 9th Grade, our curriculum, our standards, our expectations, and our discipline policy which is another big issue. Some of the students are here through a social promotion because there are no middle school credit requirements. We have a good handle on it this year because of the houses and we have Ms. Valentine, Mr. Manning, and Mr. Slemon working with the 9th graders with the discipline problems. We are standardizing everything. When they leave one class, it is pretty much uniform across all disciplines. This seems to be working out okay as we look at our failure rates to measure it. First Quarter wasn't so great but

this mid-quarter shows improvement. Our motto in the building is failure is not an option.

The second program we have in place is going through a learning curve. This is the Academic Enhancement Program. We have had some successes with some students leaving the program, but we are looking at what is not successful. Some of these students have some serious emotional issues that we are not equipped to deal with. Although we are trying to work with these students to move to the 10th grade even though some are miserable and will walk out at any time because some of the parents are not supportive. We are looking at this but it is the best we can do at this point because we cannot get funded for any of those literacy dropout prevention programs. Because we are a state agency, they are not going to give us any money to do some alternative placements, and we just can't afford it. We have to build our own programs. So we are going through a little trial and error here, but we are going to get there.

Ms. Valentine gave some recognition to the 9th Grade House teachers. They have dug in deep this year. They have an after-school homework detention. Part of the Commissioner's Review requirement is a two-way parent communication more than just report cards, progress reports, and parents calling. They are sending letters home; they are e-mailing parents. Not that none of the Davies teachers aren't doing that, but it is crucial in the 9th grade to really communicate weekly with parents. For example, if the student is to stay after school and they skip it, they will call the parents. They are working very hard with these 9th graders to try to keep them and acclimated to the Davies true education process. We do exit interviews when they leave and a lot of the reasons are, "It is just too hard here; I can't do the work." So we have to work hard to move these students to the sophomore year and keep those numbers up because we are funded for 825 students.

Mr. Gregory said it is somewhat ironic that we have more decision making in who we bring in as freshmen. There is still the mind set out there that if it is a discipline problem in our school then lets just get rid of that kid and send him over to Davies. It is so ironic because the teachers and the management team have worked so hard to have that prestigious "I have been accepted at Davies as a freshman" and yet we still seem to get other people's quote, unquote "problems." It is so, in so many cases, that they are some of the brightest students and we are only looking at grade equivalent of 5 and 6. Remember it is a blind lottery for Pawtucket and Central Falls. We may have other kids out there who really want to be here, but when you have a blind lottery for those two districts where we are getting most of our students, you can't pick and choose them. We used to be able to pick and choose them, but then they said we were becoming too elitist. So now we have this blind lottery. We don't even know who is on an IEP or a 504 unless they tell us.

Before the blind lottery system, prior to 2000, we used to do a ranking system. We looked at attendance, grades, discipline report, and an

interview. We did that for a long time and was successful, but even then we still got kids that were problems.

Dr. Segovis would like to go back and revisit this admissions process. We are taking slots away from students who probably deserve it better, and we are not getting a good fit which is what the goal should be. Mr. Chartier knows some Tollman students who wish they were here and did not make the lottery. It is very disappointing to some of the students. They will get the number on the waiting list and know they will never get in. Mr. Ferdinandi said we need to be either more selective with Pawtucket and Central Falls, or build up the enrollment from the other cities and towns.

Dr. Segovis would like to form a task force committee who will look at this and come up with some alternatives to help address this issue. Mr. Ferdinandi, Mr. Quinn, and Mr. Chartier volunteered to study the problem and then look at what we can do differently that might be better for everyone involved. In the meantime, Dr. Segovis will get some recommendations for some different types of legal advice and alternatives then we've had before.

- 5) **9th Grade Program** – Victoria A. Gailliard-Garrick, Director
This was discussed in the agenda item above.

- 6) **Other** – Victoria A. Gailliard-Garrick, Director

Recess to Executive Session Pursuant to R.I.G.L. 42.46-5 (A) (1) and (2) to Discuss Pending Litigation and Personnel Issues

At 6:12 pm, Dr. Segovis asked for motion to recess into Executive Session. Mr. Gregory made the motion to recess to Executive Session pursuant to R.I.G.L. 42.46-5 (A) (1) and (2) to discuss pending litigation and personnel issues. Mr. Bone seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Return to Regular Session

At 6:15 pm, Dr. Segovis asked for a motion to return to Regular Session; Mr. Gregory made the motion; Mr. Halkyard seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

Amendment/
addition on
1/9/08 →

Dr. Segovis announced that during Executive Session the Board had a vote and accepted the Nominating Committee's recommendation to nominate Mr. George Ortiz, Jr. His resume and bio will be forwarded to the Board of Regents for approval.

Mr. Gregory made a motion to seal the minutes of the Executive Session; Mr. Beaupre seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

IV. Adjournment:

At 6:17 p.m., Dr. Segovis asked for a motion to adjourn, all were in favor.

V. Next Meeting:

January 9, 2008