

## **APPROVED – 10/11/2012**

There was a regular meeting of the Cumberland School Committee held on Thursday, September 27, 2012 at the Cumberland High School Transitional Building Cafetorium, 2602 Mendon Road, Cumberland, Rhode Island.

**Members Present:** Lisa Beaulieu, Linda Teel, John Gibbons, Daniel Pedro, Erika Sanzi, Earl Wood. Jeff Mutter was absent.

**Administration Present:** Dr. Philip Thornton, Superintendent, Robert Mitchell, Assistant Superintendent.

**Agenda Item #1:** Chairman Convenes Meeting  
Vice Chairperson Beaulieu convened the meeting to order at 7:36 p.m.

**Agenda Item #2:** Pledge of Allegiance

**Agenda Item #3:** Approval of Agenda  
Mr. Wood made a motion to approve the agenda, 2<sup>nd</sup> Mr. Gibbons, approved 6-0.

**Agenda Item #4:** Consent Agenda

- A. Approval of Minutes: Special Meeting 8/29/12, Regular Meeting 9/13/12 and Special Meeting 9/18/12 – Mr. Wood made a motion to approve, 2<sup>nd</sup> Mr. Pedro, approved 6-0.
- B. Approval of Minutes: Executive Session 8/9/12, 8/23/12, and 9/13/12 – Mrs. Beaulieu noted that the SC needed a few extra minutes on this so she moved it down on the agenda to after item #8 and at that point Mr. Gibbons made a motion to approve, 2<sup>nd</sup> Mrs. Sanzi and Mrs. Teel, approved 6-0.
- C. Report of Executive Session Meeting on 9/27/2012 – a) Report of Executive Session Vote and b) Vote to Seal Minutes of Executive Session – Mrs. Beaulieu tabled this until the next meeting.

**Agenda Item #5:** Student Government Report

Two members of the student government reported on the following: Past events included staff orientation on 8/26 – it was a welcome back breakfast, first day of school was 8/29 for freshmen and 8/30 for everyone else, freshman elections were held on 9/13 – new officers are Gabby Salmon, Abigail McCourt, Lauren Marcello, Cameron Rosa and Nicole McCourt, first government meeting was held on 9/18 – reviewed spirit week events and made posters for spirit week. Upcoming events include spirit week from 9/30 to 10/6 – events include lip sync, talent show, class clash, homecoming. Back to school night will be 10/18 – parents will follow their student's schedule like a regular school day. On 10/23 there will be a blood drive.

**Agenda Item #6:** Superintendent's Report

Dr. Thornton gave an update on the grading policy. He noted that they have spoken with parents, teachers, and administrators and after several meetings he said that earlier in the day they sent out a slight modification – the H.S. level teachers would

be getting more training/support. He believes that everyone will feel more confident by doing additional training this year and rolling it out next fall – they will scale back to a traditional grading scale this year (except no “D’s”). The high school has some problems so we are looking at where the teachers are and where we think they need more training – the teachers are for this but are asking for more training- it will be best for the students. Dr. Thornton said they sent the teachers an email today; tomorrow an email will go to parents. K-5 levels will have a full standards based report card. He also noted that the high school academics program is getting reviewed so that it can get more rigorous. Mr. Mitchell reiterated the fact that more training needs to be done – talked about the possibility of putting a glossary on the website so that parents will be familiar with all the “lingo” associated with the new grading policy. He noted that they are going to set a schedule to get information to teachers, parents, etc. He said they are trying to provide as much information as possible to everyone. Mr. Mitchell believes that people are concerned with the transition of this grading policy – but reminded everyone that they are committed and knows that it is the best for the students. Mrs. Beaulieu asked Mr. Mitchell to break out the schedule for elementary, middle and high. Dr. Thornton stated that a template for the high school report card would probably be sent out sometime in January and then it will be worked on all winter and should hopefully be good to go in the fall.

**Agenda Item #7:** Chairperson’s Report

There is no report at this time.

**Agenda Item #8:** Comments from the Public

One parent (who did not identify herself) wanted the SC to know how nice it was that they were listening to some parents at the grading policy meetings. She said there are a lot of parents that are very happy that the teachers are going to be well trained.

Jeannie G. reviewed the symptoms of an allergy reaction and she wondered if Epi pens should be kept in each schools cafeteria and also wanted to make sure that if the SC did make any changes to the current policy on Food Allergies, that they act on the side of caution and keep the children safe.

Susan B. wanted to ask the SC to make sure that they make it known that the 2014 requirement states that you need a 2 on your Necaps to graduate – we need to let the students know this – it needs to be loud and clear.

**Agenda Item #9:** Reports of Standing Committees

- A. Payment of Bills – Mr. Wood said they made no payments tonight.
- B. Achievement and Communications Sub-Committee Update – Mrs. Beaulieu said the committee had met and discussed the grading policy – she said that a lot of the parent’s questions were answered at the meeting. She said they do need to know how this will affect scholarships. Necap results were also discussed briefly.
- C. Mrs. Teel said the committee has not met in a couple of weeks but they will be meeting again during the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> week of October.

**Agenda Item #10:** Old Business

- A. Transportation Update: 1) Discussion of Revised Bus Schedule – Ann, the general manager for Durham spoke about how the new bus schedule was going. She started off by saying that they were six days into it – they had no calls from parents so far – she said they eliminated some tiers from the schedule and more buses were on time now. She said the special ed buses transport the pre-k students and it seems like more and more students are being added each week, so these buses are still a little late. She said the early release at the high school on Wednesday's is supposed to depart at 1:05 p.m. – but it seems like they are not leaving until 1:15 or 1:20 and that is making the buses late to the middle schools. She was hoping that Durham could work with the high school so that they could roll out on time – it would help. Ann apologized for all of the chaos in the beginning of the year. She also noted that another issue are the late buses that run to the middle school for 3:30 – she said they rely on Mercymount for this run – she said they would like to propose 3:20 or 3:25 so that they could use other buses – or even 3:45 – because other buses would be available and then they would not have to rely on Mercymount – it is something that needs to be looked at. Also, other complaints – bus #23 (1st week) she said they had to investigate it and they did remove the driver from that run – they have a temporary driver right now and they are hiring more drivers. Right now she feels they are on time 98% of the time and they are addressing all issues from parents. Mrs. Sanzi asked about double loading again at Community and Mr. Neves (Durham) said that using the second drop off and pick up is not going to work – it is unsafe, but he said they may be able to double up buses on dismissal – one on driveway and one on Arnold Mills Road but they will have to look at it again. Mrs. Sanzi asked about opening up the gate in the parking lot sooner so that cars can go into the parking lot sooner (this will also help avoid a back up). Ann noted that beginning the second week of October the fire department is coming in to give us training – they will be training our drivers and monitors on the use of the epi pens. Mrs. Beaulieu stated that she would like accurate times to be on the routes before any approvals from the SC. She also asked about a bus arriving at 7:10 a.m. at the high school – she wondered if that was enough time for the students. Mr. Neves said they have already moved some times up in the morning due to the traffic on Mendon Road, but they may have to move more times up. Mr. Pedro suggested that some of the bus stops on High Street be moved to a side street – parents are parking all over and waiting until the bus arrives to let their children out of the car. Mr. Neves said he would look into it.
- B. Discussion and/or Vote to Approve Resolution: SC-PR-9-2012-10: Repair of Exhaust Fans for Heating System at Cumberland High School – Alex Prignano reviewed the problem – units have been ordered - \$142,000 from capital repairs – will move to the general fund. Mr. Wood made a motion to approve as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup> Mr. Gibbons, approved 6-0.

**Agenda Item #11:** New Business

- A. Review of NECAP Science Results – Mr. Mitchell noted that the students took these tests in May 2012 and they were 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students. He said they were not satisfied with the results and that there have already been changes made. He reviewed some of the numbers – there were improvements to elementary in 2012. Professional development in Science has been given to several teachers and from this he believes we will see more improvements. Middle school teachers are participating in Science PD as well. High school students had an 18.8% improvement between 2008 and 2012. Mr. Mitchell noted that he and the Superintendent and the Principals from each school will be discussing the results in depth and will be discussing what to do next – training, etc. He thinks that continued training of the teachers would be helpful – he is optimistic to see improvements in all of the schools. Dr. Thornton thinks within a couple of years we will all see some big jumps in the numbers because of the Gemsnet training.
- B. Discussion and/or Vote to Approve 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading of the Following Policy:  
1)GBCB Employee Dress Code Policy – Dr. Thornton started off by stating that the following lines needed to be amended –Face jewelry or body piercing must be covered or not worn – and – Offensive tattoos, excessive tattoos must be covered. The attorney spoke about the two lines – he thought they were too vague, difficult to enforce. He said that some stuff does get litigated and if that happened you would actually have to show that these things are disruptive when push comes to shove – so he suggested changing them. Dr. Thornton said to strike those two bullet points from both sides of the policy – Business Casual Dress – What is not appropriate and Friday and School Spirit Casual Dress – What is not appropriate. Mr. Pedro made a motion to amend the policy and strike those bullet points regarding face jewelry and tattoos, 2<sup>nd</sup> Mrs. Teel, approved 6-0. Then Mrs. Teel read the changed language in the “Purpose” paragraph of the policy and then Mrs. Teel made a motion to amend the policy to modify the Purpose paragraph in GBCB, 2<sup>nd</sup> Mr. Wood, approved 6-0. Mrs. Teel then made a motion to approve GBCB as amended, 2<sup>nd</sup> Mr. Pedro, but then Mrs. Beaulieu said that based on legal counsel she thought they should table this and post the amended policy on the website and put this on the next agenda, so Mr. Pedro withdrew his motion and made another motion to table this until the next meeting, 2<sup>nd</sup> Mrs. Teel, approved 6-0.
- C. Discussion and/or Vote to Approve 2012-2013 Bus Routes – Mrs. Teel made a motion to table until the routes are accurate, 2<sup>nd</sup> Mrs. Sanzi, approved 6-0.
- D. Discussion and/or Vote to Approve Resolution: SC-R-2012-07 Amended FY 13 School Budget – Mr. Wood made a motion to approve, 2<sup>nd</sup> Mrs. Teel, approved 6-0.
- E. Home School Instruction Requests 2012-2013 School Year – Dr. Thornton stated that they should be approved as presented. Mr. Gibbons made a motion to approve, 2<sup>nd</sup> Mrs. Teel, approved 6-0.

- F. Discussion of Hot Water System at Joseph L. McCourt Middle School – Alex Prignano noted that during a recent walkthrough of the school he and Dr. Thornton noticed the system leaking and after getting some prices to repair it, they believe it will be better to let Sodexo get some pricing on replacing the system because it is too old. There will be a resolution coming when they have more information and Alex also noted that the new one would be more efficient.

**Agenda Item #12:** Personnel Recommendations

Ms. Fogell had the following personnel recommendations:

**Leaves of Absence**

I request the advice and consent of the School Committee on the FMLA of Melissa Custer, Special Educator, at North Cumberland Middle School, effective 10/17/2012 with an expected return date of 12/7/2012. (Budgeted)

I request the advice and consent of the School Committee on the FMLA of Gina D’Aguanno, School Nurse/Teacher, at JJM Cumberland Hill Elementary School, effective 1/18/2013 with an expected return date of 1/2/2014. (Budgeted)

Mr. Pedro made a motion to approve, 2<sup>nd</sup> Mrs. Teel, approved 6-0.

**Agenda Item #13:** Comments from the Public

No comments at this time.

**Agenda Item #14:** School Committee Comments (School Liaison Reports)

No reports at this time.

**Agenda Item #15:** Vote to go into Executive Session for Discussion on Items Referred to in R.I.G.L. 42-46-5.

Dr. Thornton said there would be no Executive Session tonight.

**Agenda Item #16:** Adjournment

Mr. Gibbons made a motion to adjourn, 2<sup>nd</sup> Mr. Wood, approved 6-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Linda A. Jackvony