

**Board of Education
Newtown, Connecticut**

Minutes of the Board of Education meeting on Tuesday, March 6, 2012, in the board room at 3 Primrose Street.

D. Leidlein, Chair	J. Robinson
L. Roche, Vic Chair	L. Gejda
C. McCubbin, Secretary (absent)	R. Bienkowski
R. Gaines	4 Staff
W. Hart	10 Public
K. Alexander	1 Press
J. Vouros (absent)	

Called to order at 7:40 p.m.

Item 1 – Consent Agenda

MOTION: Mr. Gaines moved to approve the consent agenda. Mr. Hart seconded. Mrs. Roche asked to remove the donation to the N.I.C.E. program. Mr. Hart seconded.

Mrs. Leidlein said we received an email from Mrs. Llodra's regarding the statement in the minutes of February 22, 2012 on page 2 concerning the Blum Shapiro report. It stated she would report to the Legislative Council by the second meeting in March. At this time the report has not been scheduled so it may be on a later agenda. The minutes will be adjusted to reflect that change.

Vote on February 22, 2012 minutes: 3 ayes (Mrs. Leidlein, Mr. Hart, Mr. Alexander)

Vote on March 1, 2012 minutes: 3 ayes (Mrs. Leidlein, Mrs. Roche, Mr. Hart)

Mrs. Leidlein asked about what training the coaches and volunteer coaches go through. Dr. Robinson said they all have to be certified and fingerprinted and have CPR and emergency training. They also have to be trained in recognizing bullying. Certification and education backgrounds are checked and they must also attend state training. Mrs. Leidlein asked for that specific information and the new bullying law and training. Dr. Robinson said the law is in effect and training has to be completed by the end of the school year. We are trying to get all the coaches in this year. The training takes place several weeks into the season.

Mrs. Leidlein was concerned that they would start before completing training. She asked when the next training session would be held after the one this month. She also requested a list of coaches who completed the training.

Mrs. Roche asked what would happen if a coach didn't make that meeting and if they could coach before trained.

Dr. Gejda said there has been one training session by Scott Clayton. The RESCs will also offer training.

Vote on personnel item in consent agenda: 5 ayes

Mrs. Roche asked about what the N.I.C.E. donation money would be used for.

Dr. Robinson said the donation was of equipment to use in world language classes such as for communication and producing videos.

Vote on the donation to the N.I.C.E program: 5 ayes

Item 2 – Public Participation - noneItem 3 – Reports

Mrs. Leidlein asked the elementary principals to give their report on staffing. Those attending included Jo-Ann Peters, Barbara Gasparine, Dawn Hochsprung and Chris Geissler

Ms. Gasparine feels our current staff at Head O'Meadow provides the best environment. There are some discrepancies in Dr. Chung's report. It's early to address this because the numbers will most likely change.

Ms. Peters said that kindergarten and first grades have the greatest level of flux. Mrs. Hochsprung felt the biggest discrepancies with Dr. Chung's report were first grade going into second grade. Her concern is 18 students are receiving reading support in first grade. She would prefer to move a third or fourth grade teacher to a lower grade for lower class sizes.

Mr. Geissler said the kindergarten figures for Middle Gate School are closer to those of Dr. Chung. First grade could go down one teacher. Twenty-seven of the first grade students receive services and 21 in grade two also need services. Grade four has 99 students at 24 per class if we keep four teachers.

Mr. Alexander asked for the corrected Middle Gate enrollment material.

Mr. Gaines said that regarding the enrollment guidelines, we need to look at them with a grain of salt when you look at the large number of special education needs in the classroom.

There was no correspondence.

Chair Report:

Mrs. Leidlein spoke about an ad hoc scheduling committee to address the scheduling at Reed Intermediate School. Mr. Vouros would like to be on it. He made a connection with Shelton. In forming the committee we could possibly add programs at Reed such as foreign language. Mrs. Roche would also be on the committee and she asked Mr. Alexander if he was interested. The committee would also look at other schools.

Dr. Robinson asked what the task would be of the existing Reed scheduling committee. Mrs. Leidlein said a blended committee would enhance the programs at RIS. The committee would collect data.

At the last meeting the Board budget guidebook which was developed by community members was presented in public participation. She spoke to CAFE and the Board council and both recommended that we not address this document because of issues regarding equal access if we choose one group over another. It can be disseminated in the community but public funds cannot be used to do so.

Mr. Hart said that group worked very hard. It is built on raw data from two organizations in the state. A number of communities have done this. This is an excellent piece that should be looked at.

Mrs. Leidlein has only read parts. She contacted the spokesperson and commended them on their work to back the budget process.

Mr. Alexander asked if they could distribute where to get information on the report during a public participation.

Mrs. Leidlein said they could do that during public participation but it cannot be on the agenda. They have to use their own funds to disseminate that information.

Superintendent's Report:

Roxanne Malaragno, a teacher at from Middle Gate School, has been selected by Connecticut Magazine as one of the outstanding "40 Under 40" for her contributions to the teaching profession that go beyond her regular duties.

The Board of finance will vote on the budget at their meeting March 14. There is a NCLB workshop on Wednesday at 4:00 p.m. in the high school lecture hall.

We are following up with comments from the Coffee with the Board and will be setting up parent workshops on safe school climate.

Mrs. Leidlein asked that the Board be notified when parent workshop will be held.

Mr. Bienkowski gave an update on our energy costs for this year which gives us a positive \$39,000.

Dr. Robinson said that the PTA presidents asked how to help with the budget message. One was a request for her and Pat Llodra to do a presentation at the Senior Center. The best time would be after the Legislative Council approves the budget and before the vote. She was contacting them and will firm it up.

Subcommittee Reports:

Mr. Hart attended one curriculum meeting.

Dr. Gejda said they are looking at social studies in grades 3, 4, 5 and 6 to bring to the Board as a unit. The other curriculum work includes level 2 French and Spanish courses.

Mrs. Leidlein asked if work has been started on the curriculum for full day kindergarten.

Dr. Gejda said she wanted to know the timeline for that curriculum. March is hard because of CMTs. April is the perfect time to work with something ready by mid-May.

Mrs. Leidlein asked for regular reports on what is being done.

Communications Subcommittee:

Mrs. Roche said they had a second meeting. They compared calendars on the websites and how schools sent out notices. The next meeting will meet with the webmasters.

The Technology Subcommittee will meet March 29.

The Policy Subcommittee will be March 12.

Ad Hoc Facilities Subcommittee:

Mr. Gaines presented the committee report which is attached. This committee was commissioned in 2009 based on Dr. Chung's report and was formed in November of 2010. The final recommendation was that the Board of Education commission an enrollment study in 2013 and also recommends that when the budgeted student enrollment is projected to be 1,500 or less for the pre-kindergarten to fourth grade group the Board of Education begin the process of closing a school. It is further recommended that subject to the outcome of a feasibility study at the time the school closing process is

undertaken, Reed Intermediate School be closed. It is anticipated that the district would seek outside expertise with any closing and that the total process would take 18 to 20 months.

Mrs. Roche asked that this report be shared with the Board of Finance.

Item 5 – New Business

2012-2013 School Calendar:

MOTION: Mr. Hart moved to approve the 2012-2013 school calendar. Mr. Gaines seconded.

Dr. Robinson said she moved our April break up a week so it was not the week before the referendum. She received several emails to keep it the third week because we would be a week off from the rest of the region. Her preference would be to keep in line with them. There is not a large transportation cost.

Mrs. Leidlein suggested removing the November early release day since we have the November 6 staff development day. Another change would be to move the January 4 early dismissal day to January 18 to fit in with the long weekend and move February 1 to February 15 for another long weekend.

Dr. Robinson provided attendance information for the week before the February break and the week of the February break. There is not a tremendous difference in absences. Student absences the first week were 25% and the following week were 15%.

Mrs. Leidlein said normally we have to add four days due to weather. She proposes we add in 3 snow days to make the projected last day June 14 so they would already be added in. We would remove them if we have no cancellations. June 21 is the preferred last day.

MOTION: Mrs. Leidlein moved to amend the motion to move the April break to the week of April 15 through 19. Mrs. Roche seconded. Vote: 5 ayes

Mr. Hart feels it should be left where it is.

Dr. Robinson said the majority of our teachers live in surrounding communities so their children will be off when they are in school and vice versa.

Mr. Gaines would support moving it to the week of April 15.

Mr. Gaines moved to amend the motion to adjust the April vacation to the week of the 15-19. Mrs. Roche seconded. Vote: 5 ayes

MOTION: Mrs. Roche moved to amend the motion to change the November 2 early dismissal day to a full day, move the January 4 early dismissal day to January 18, move the February 1 early dismissal day to February 15, and move the April 5 early dismissal day to April 12. Mr. Gaines seconded. Vote: 5 ayes

MOTION: Mr. Hart moved to amend the motion to publicize the last projected day of school as June 18 based upon the assumption that there will be five emergency weather closing days. Mr. Gaines seconded.

Mrs. Roche also said it needed to include the 3 make-up days of June 19, 20 and 21st after we have had 5 snow days. Any additional days would be taken from the April break starting the 19, 18, etc. going backwards.

Vote: 5 ayes

Vote on the full calendar: 5 ayes

MOTION: Mrs. Roche moved that the Board of Education approval a central email address. Mr. Alexander seconded.

Mr. Alexander feels one email would be better to reach every member. It would not replace the individual Board email addresses on the website.

Dr. Robinson said they will automatically archive the emails.

Mr. Hart said we are obligated to retain our emails. A number of districts have email boxes for the Board members. Maybe we should include them in records retention.

Mr. Alexander said this will come to the communications subcommittee.

Dr. Robinson said the Board group has been created.

It is newtownboe@newtown.k12.ct.us. Individual addresses were also assigned to each member.

Vote: 5 ayes

Item 6 – Public Participation - none

MOTION: Mr. Hart moved to adjourn. Mr. Gaines seconded. Vote: 5 ayes

Item 7 - Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Debbie Leidlein
Chair