

TRUMBULL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
TRUMBULL, CONNECTICUT
Regular Meeting – August 20, 2013
Long Hill Administration Building
Lorraine R. Smith Assembly Room

The Trumbull Board of Education convened in the Long Hill Administration Building for a Regular Meeting.

Members present:

S. Wright, Chairperson
D. Herbst, Vice Chairperson
T. Kelly, Secretary
L. Chory, Board Member
L. Labella, Board Member
M. Ward, Board Member

Members absent:

R. Seaman, Board Member

Agenda Item I – Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

Agenda Item II – Preliminary Business

A. Salute to the Flag - The Public Session began with a salute to the Flag.

B. Correspondence – Mr. Kelly conveyed that the Board received multiple emails from parents supporting the maintenance of small class size at several elementary schools.

C. Comments – Ann Marie Evangelista, Trumbull Town Council member, spoke about the overcrowding at Frenchtown Elementary School and residency issues. She asked the Board to consider having central registration and hiring a residency officer to oversee registration of students. Carly Halaby Smith and Irene McGeachy spoke in support of having four classes of grade 2 at Tashua Elementary School. Jen Kehley thanked the Superintendent and Board Chair for responding to her email and asked for five classes at the grade 4 level at Daniels Farm Elementary School. Cindy Penkoff, Town Board of Finance Alternate member, spoke about residency issues and asked the Board to consider hiring of a full time residency specialist and creating central registration of students. Kerry Malzewski spoke in support of smaller class size for Frenchtown Elementary kindergarten as those class sizes are over the guidelines. Vicki Tesoro spoke in support of maintaining small class size and thanked the Board for their consideration of changing their November Board meeting date to accommodate the annual 9th Grade Underage Drinking Forum. Gina Hess spoke about the overcrowding of buses for Frenchtown and asked the Board to review the situation. Edna Borchetta spoke in support of having four classes of grade 2 at Tashua Elementary School. Dawn Paskevicz and Vanessa Eisenman spoke in support of small class size at Middlebrook Elementary School and asked for the maintenance of fifth grade teachers at the school. Julia Hepfer spoke in support of five classes at the grade 4 level at Daniels Farm Elementary School.

Agenda Item III – Consent Agenda

A. Personnel – Superintendent Dr. Cialfi noted that one resignation was received that needed Board action. It was moved (Herbst) seconded (Labella) to accept the resignation of Kerry McDonald, special education teacher at Booth Hill Elementary School since August 2012, resigning effective August 16, 2013. Vote: Unanimous in favor.

- B. Approval/Minutes – Regular Meeting – 8/06/13 By unanimous consent of members present at that meeting, the minutes were approved as presented.
- C. Approval/Financial Reports as of 6/30/13 –Mr. O’Keefe reviewed the executive summary, variance analysis and financial reports for the 12 months ended June 30, 2013. Discussion ensued regarding computer purchases and tuition. It was moved (Herbst) seconded (Labella) to accept the Board of Education Expense Report for the 12 months ended 6/30/13 as presented. Vote: Unanimous in favor. It was moved (Herbst) seconded (Labella) to accept the Grant Expense Report for the 12 months ended 6/30/13 as presented. Vote: Unanimous in favor. It was moved (Herbst) seconded (Chory) to accept the Consolidated Financial Statement as of and for the 12 months ended 6/30/13 as presented. Vote: Unanimous in favor. A brief discussion ensued regarding overspending in various accounts. It was moved (Herbst) seconded (Labella) to accept the Board of Education Programs Detail Report as of 6/30/13 as presented. Vote: Unanimous in favor. It was moved (Herbst) seconded (Labella) to accept the Expendable Trust Detail Report as of 6/30/13 as presented. Vote: Unanimous in favor. It was moved (Herbst) seconded (Labella) to accept the Student Activity Detail Report as of 6/30/13 as presented. Vote: Unanimous in favor.

At this time, it was moved (Labella) seconded (Herbst) to take Agenda Item IV-E out of order. Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Agenda Item IV—Reports/Action Items

- E. Enrollment/Staffing Update—Dr. Cialfi thanked the parents who commented at this evening’s meeting on maintaining small class size. He commented that administration was continually reviewing enrollments of Tashua’s grade 2 and Daniels Farm’s grade 4 and at this time, classes at both those schools/grade levels fall within class size guidelines. Dr. Cialfi reviewed class sizes at the elementary schools and conveyed that class size guidelines have been maintained at all grade levels, with the exception of Frenchtown’s kindergarten classes. Board Chair Mr. Wright commented that Trumbull Public Schools is moving forward with Common Core State Standards (CCSS) as it is a better way to teach to improve student outcomes. Mrs. Herbst echoed Mr. Wright’s comments and assured parents that while they are concerned with class size, guidelines are being followed and their children are receiving a quality education. Mrs. Herbst also commented that the Board/Administration strives to have equity of class size at all schools. Dr. Cialfi also commented on the implementation of CCSS and the district’s emphasis on instruction at the elementary level with support from the K-5 Program Leaders and professional development. Mr. Wright commented that while he appreciates the input from parents, the Board defers to the Superintendent and school administration on matters of class size. He commented that he doesn’t believe increased enrollment is due to non-residents enrolling in Trumbull schools and the district does monitor residency issues. Mrs. Herbst commented that she has worked with Mrs. Mallozzi [administrative assistant] who has done an excellent job with monitoring residency and following up on referrals [reports of non-residents attending Trumbull schools]. Mrs. Herbst also noted that State Statute is loose with regard to residency and other districts are dealing with the same issues. Dr. Cialfi stated that he would invite Mrs. Penkoff and Mrs. Evangelista to meet with him and Mrs. Mallozzi to review Trumbull’s procedures with regard to proof of residency. Mr. Wright also commented that there is the Federal Homeless statute which supersedes state and local law and impacts residency. Mrs. Labella commented that the Board has been dealing several years with the distribution of students at the elementary level. She noted that while overall district enrollment has decreased, Frenchtown’s enrollment continues to increase creating overcrowding and suggested that this situation be addressed. Dr. Cialfi proposed that the district move forward with a committee to review redistricting beginning in October. Discussion ensued regarding equity of class size among the schools, monitoring residency issues, redistricting students to eliminate overcrowding, and Frenchtown’s kindergarten enrollment

exceeding class size guidelines. Dr. Cialfi stated that additional para time will be added to Frenchtown due to increased enrollment in kindergarten and lack of space for another class. He shared that incoming Frenchtown families with kindergarteners have been offered to have their child attend Middlebrook Elementary School. More discussion ensued regarding needs of students in a particular class, interventions, and addition of paras when needed.

At this time, it was moved (Herbst) seconded (Labella) to recess for five minutes at 8:23 p.m. Vote: Unanimous in favor. Meeting resumed at 8:35 p.m.

- A. Approval/FFA Trip to Kentucky—Trumbull High School (THS) Agriscience Department Chair Ms. Berlekovic shared details of the annual National Future Farmers of America (FFA) Convention which will take place from Tuesday, October 29, 2013 through Saturday, November 2, 2013 in Louisville, Kentucky. This trip would be open to 8 to 12 Agriscience students in grades 10 through 12. The program includes Morse Evaluation Events, leadership workshops, and motivational speakers. Students would be contributing to the cost of the trip along with monies from fundraising activities. It was moved (Ward) seconded (Chory) to approve the FFA trip to Louisville, Kentucky as outlined with such approval contingent upon parent(s)/guardian signing a waiver relieving the school district of any financial obligations due to trip cancellations for any reason and with the stipulation that the Board can rescind it at any time depending on the security situation. Vote: Unanimous in favor.

At this time, it was moved (Herbst) seconded (Chory) to take Agenda Items IV-C and IV-D out of order. Vote: Unanimous in favor.

- C. Approval/Curriculum Guides—Dr. Paslov shared that three curriculum guides were being presented for Board approval. She noted that all guides have been updated to reflect the Common Core State Standards. She and THS PE/Health teacher Ms. Kluspes reviewed *Health 9*, a quarter credit, quarter semester course which is required for all grade 9 students. They also shared the Health textbook with the Board. Topics will include nutrition, substance abuse, alcohol(ism), human relationships, HIV/AIDS and the mandatory 9th Grade Underage Drinking Forum. It was moved (Herbst) seconded (Labella) to approve the curriculum guide and text for *Health 9* as presented. Vote: Unanimous in favor. THS World Languages Department Chair Mrs. Perusi reviewed *Spanish V*, a full year, one credit course offered to students in grade 12. This course will help students develop linguistic proficiency, broaden their communication skills and includes the study of Hispanic culture. It was moved (Herbst) seconded (Labella) to approve the curriculum guide for *Spanish V* as presented. Vote: Unanimous in favor. Dr. Paslov reviewed *Comparative World Religions*, a one semester, half credit, non-level course offered to all students. The course will acquaint students with the major world religions and present an overview of other religions which have impacted civilization. It was moved (Ward) seconded (Herbst) to approve the curriculum guide for *Comparative World Religions* as presented. Vote: Unanimous in favor.
- D. Approval/Textbook—Dr. Paslov shared that the Curriculum Subcommittee met to review a new text for the Agriscience program. THS Agriscience teacher Mr. Allen reviewed *The Art of Floral Design* to be used in the Agriscience ECE Floral Art course which offers college credit at UConn. The course is a combination of the theory of floral design and the practical aspects of floral arranging. It was moved (Herbst) seconded (Labella) to approve *The Art of Floral Design* text as presented. Vote: Unanimous in favor.

B. Policies/First Reading

1. Field Trips—Mrs. Cantafio shared that this policy was last updated in January 2011. Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) reviewed the policy at the request of the Board. She briefly discussed changes to the policy and noted that the Board's attorney and school nursing supervisor were

consulted for input. This policy will return to the Board for a second reading and approval in the near future.

At this time, it was moved (Labella) seconded (Herbst) to take Agenda Item IV-H out of order. Vote: Unanimous in favor.

H. THS Golden Eagle Marching Band/Winter Guard—Dr. Cialfi conveyed that as a follow up to parent comment at the last Board meeting, he, along with Mr. Wright and Mrs. Herbst met with Band Director Peter Horton and several band parents to discuss the increase in the participation fee. Those fees were increased from \$550 to \$740 for marching band and from \$450 to \$740 for winter guard and percussion. Dr. Cialfi stated that he did not support an increase in the participation fee. Mr. Horton reviewed the marching band budget, approximately \$197,000 with monies raised [anticipated \$30,000] from the Fall Band Classic used towards their budget, leaving \$167,000 to be funded by participation fees. He explained where monies are spent, fundraising allocation to participants, and the need for the increase in participation fee to be used to fund program expenses such as competition fees, instructor stipends, and replacement uniforms. He stated that instructor fees paid from the participation fee amount to approximately \$82,000. Mr. Horton shared that fundraisers, such as the Winter Guard and Percussion shows, are used to fund big trips, such as the Citrus Bowl in Florida or Fiesta Bowl in Arizona, taken every two years. It was noted that the Board only provides the band program with \$90,000 from their operating budget and Mr. Wright commented that some of those monies are used to fund instructors with remaining balance for other expenses. Mrs. Herbst thanked Mr. Horton and band parents for meeting with Board members and administration and commented that many issues with the marching band are complicated because the program is funded by parents. She conveyed that marching band does involve education [instruction] and commented that instructor fees should be funded by the Board of Education, approximately \$82,000. Discussion ensued regarding instructor stipends and protocols for employment, course requirement for band participation, inability of students to participate because of cost, lack of equity with other programs such as athletics and academic teams, and possible monies from the Board's current operating budget to fund instructor stipends. Mrs. Labella thanked Mr. Horton and band parents for their efforts with the band program. She suggested the Board take more responsibility for funding the marching band and supports paying instructor stipends from the Board's operating budget. Mrs. Labella also suggested that all activities tied to a class, i.e. marching band, Mock Trial, We the People, should be reviewed by a committee to address all concerns including financial support from the Board. She noted that these programs afford further opportunities for students and students should not be turned away from a program if they cannot afford participation fees. Mrs. Labella asked for Board support on addressing this issue. Several Board members agreed with Mrs. Labella. Mr. Wright commented that the marching band parent organization annually files IRS Form 990 which lists all their income and expenses. Mr. Kelly suggested the Board review all activities, including athletics, which incur a participation fee and would like clarification of responsibilities/authority of parent organizations, i.e. marching band parents, Touchdown Club. Further discussion ensued regarding band trips and the impact on participation fees if the Board pays for instructor fees. It was noted that the participation fee would be reduced to approximately \$450 from \$740 if the band were to receive \$82,000 from the Board's operating budget. Following discussion, it was moved (Herbst) seconded (Labella) to direct Business Manager Mr. O'Keefe to review the Board's operating budget and identify where \$82,000 can be found to subsidize instructor stipends for the marching band [to be presented to the Board for action at their next meeting]. Vote: Unanimous in favor. Mrs. Labella commented that it is the consensus of the Board that the Superintendent pursue forming a committee to review all student activities for which there is a fee to participate. Mr. Ward commented that the Board should be responsible for band uniforms in the same way the Board pays for athletic uniforms. Mr. Horton thanked the Board and administration for their support.

- F. Approval/Authorized Signature Change Form—Dr. Cialfi conveyed with the hiring of a new Superintendent, Board action is required to authorize Dr. Gary Cialfi as an official of record to be involved with the Connecticut State Department of Education for the processing of all claims for reimbursement with regard to Child Nutrition Programs. It was moved (Ward) seconded (Herbst) to approve and sign the revision of the Authorized Signers change form for the Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs as noted. Vote: Unanimous in favor.
- G. Approval/Head Start Food Service Agreement—Dr. Cialfi Head noted that this is an annual agreement between Trumbull/Monroe Head Start program and the Trumbull Board of Education Food Service Department, who furnishes the meals for the joint program. Board approval is needed for compliance with Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). It was moved (Ward) seconded (Chory) to approve the Head Start Food Service Agreement as outlined. Vote: Unanimous in favor.
- I. Annual Report—The Annual Report is forwarded to the First Selectman which provides an informative outline of what transpired in the district in 2012-13. The report contains summaries of all departments and gives much information regarding CMT and CAPT testing, curriculum initiatives, plant and technology work, PPS, and all activities that promote student learning. It was moved (Herbst) seconded (Chory) to accept the Superintendent’s Annual Report as submitted. Vote: Unanimous in favor.
- J. Proposed BOE Meeting Date Change—Dr. Cialfi asked that the Board consider changing their Tuesday, November 12, 2013 Board meeting to Wednesday, November 13, 2013. The reason for this request is that November 12th is the only date that Trumbull High School can hold their annual Grade 9 Underage Drinking Forum since other possible dates in November would conflict with scheduled parent/student events and holidays. It was moved (Ward) seconded (Chory) to approve the change of date for the November Board meeting to Wednesday, November 13, 2013. Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Agenda Item V—Receive and File

These items were received and filed.

Adjournment

Board Members gave unanimous consent to adjourn the Public Session at 9:50 p.m.