

TRUMBULL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
TRUMBULL, CONNECTICUT
Regular Meeting – April 8, 2014
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:

D. Herbst, Chairperson
R. Seaman, Secretary
J. Donofrio, Board Member
S. LaFrance, Board Member
J. Peddle, Board Member
M. Ward, Board Member

Members absent:

L. Chory, Vice Chairperson

Agenda Item I – Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m.

Agenda Item II – Preliminary Business

- A. Salute to the Flag - The Public Session began with a salute to the Flag.
- B. Correspondence – Mrs. Seaman noted that the Board received numerous emails from parents regarding concerns with the elementary enrollment study.
- C. Comments – Michelle Genuario voiced her concerns with the redistricting plans and asked for clarification on all enrollment numbers used in the report. She further stated that all students deserve to be educated in a similar environment. Heidi Langan spoke in support of keeping grades K through 2 students who are residents of Eaves at Frenchtown and expressed concerns with moving those students to Middlebrook. Richard White voiced his concerns with many aspects of the report, including using maximum class size and possible negative impact of adding students to Middlebrook. He noted that Middlebrook is currently the lowest performing school in the district based on CMT scores and ranks 145th in the State while Jane Ryan ranks 9th in the State on CMT scores. He questioned what steps the Board is taking to address the significant gap between schools and asked for equity in results for all schools. He also handed his statement to the Board. Lenny Kerr questioned Committee members as to where they reside and noted that no one on the Committee lives in the Middlebrook district. Steve Perlah voiced his concerns with moving students into Middlebrook and stated that the report does not address consequences for students since Middlebrook scores are low. Kathleen Hoefler voiced her concerns with adding students to Middlebrook and why other schools were not included as she would like all students in town to have an equal education. Traci Galla voiced her concerns with transferring students to only Middlebrook as other schools such as Jane Ryan have additional space, and asked the Board to provide for additional resources for these students and to consider the quality of education provided for all students of Trumbull. David Galla voiced his concerns that Middlebrook will need additional resources for students coming from Frenchtown, the allocation of teachers and technology, and asked the Board to minimize the disruption of students and make a decision that is fair and equitable to all. Kerry Malzewski stated that there were major concerns with the report and scenarios, noting

that it was moving the problem of overcrowding from one school to another. She asked the Board to consider having a Town Hall meeting where parents and community members can ask questions and receive answers. Cindy Penkoff, Town Council member, shared that she received many phone calls, emails, and text messages from parents concerned with both scenarios as they target only two schools. She stated that both options were questionable and that long term goals need to be addressed. Beth Gilman, Town Council member and Frenchtown parent, voiced her concerns that the report targets one population in one housing development, contains questionable data, and is without a long term option. Ruth Fontilla voiced her concern with Middlebrook becoming overcrowded with the addition of students from Frenchtown and would like to see more equity with specialists assigned to schools. Stacey Tellis voiced her concern with overcrowding Middlebrook and possible lack of services for students. Adriana Mozzi voiced her concerns with the proposals targeting one area of town and asked for a proposal that is fair to the whole town. Board Chair Mrs. Herbst shared that there would be no vote taken this evening on the proposals being presented, thanked the speakers for their comments and asked that they remain at the meeting to listen to the presentation on the Elementary Enrollment Study.

D. Recognitions

1. Trumbull High School (THS) Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA)—Dr. Cialfi shared the DECA students recently participated in the State Career Development Conference where eleven students qualified for the National Competition to take place in Atlanta, Georgia in May. DECA Advisor Todd Manuel shared the accomplishments of club members. The following students and their advisor were recognized and commended for their achievements: Julianne Becker, Beena Jacob, Prithvi Mahesh, Brittany Kubicko, Hannah Lillicraf, Kristine Nickson, Aleksandra Pirog, Jeanette Marini, Morgan Fried, Jacquelyn Sheehan, Justin Lynch, Matthew Kapell, Stephen D'Amato, Uladislau Sychou, Kerry Marques and Sydney Speaks.

At this time it was moved (Seaman) seconded (LaFrance) to take Agenda Item IV-A out of order. Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Agenda Item IV—Reports/Action Items

- A. Approval/THS DECA Trip to Atlanta, Georgia—THS DECA Advisor Todd Manuel reviewed details of the International Career Development Conference (ICDC) taking place in Atlanta, Georgia. He noted that 10 students will participate in the National Competition at the conference. The conference is scheduled for Saturday, May 3 through Wednesday, May 7, 2014 and students would miss 3 days of school. He reviewed fundraisers and community support which will subsidize the trip and noted that student costs should not exceed \$600. It was moved (Ward) seconded (Peddle) to approve the DECA trip to Atlanta, Georgia 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. Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Agenda Item III – Consent Agenda

- A. Personnel – Superintendent Dr. Cialfi noted that three resignations were received that needed Board action. It was moved (Seaman) seconded (LaFrance) to accept the resignation of Sandra Matthew, Grade 4 teacher at Jane Ryan Elementary School since November 2004, retiring effective June 30, 2014; Carolyn Sepe, Family and Consumer Sciences teacher at Hillcrest Middle School since August 1999, retiring effective June 30, 2014; and Christine Farrell, elementary teacher at Tashua Elementary School since August 2000, resigning effective June 30, 2014. Vote: Unanimous in favor.

- B. Approval/Minutes – Regular Meeting – 3/25/14 It was moved (Peddle) seconded (LaFrance) to approve the minutes as presented. Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Agenda Item IV—Reports/Action Items

- B. 2014-2015 Budget Update—Dr. Cialfi reported the Town Council will vote and adopt the Town/Board of Education (BOE) budget for 2014-15 at their meeting on April 22, 2014. He conveyed that the present status of the BOE Budget is a 2.04% increase or an allocation of \$94,858,531. Dr. Cialfi stated that if the Board's allocation remains at 2.04%, staff and programs would be impacted. He noted that all programs and staff would have to be reviewed and asked the Board to consider having a special meeting after the Town Council vote to address the 2014-15 budget. He conveyed that many considerations must be taken into account with allocating next year's budget such as staffing levels, shifting students, and deployment of staff. Board Chair Mrs. Herbst agreed that a special meeting would be helpful and asked Dr. Cialfi to poll Board members for a date.
- D. Non-Renewal of Non-Tenured Staff—Each year, prior to May 1st, the Board of Education is asked to non-renew contracts of non-tenured staff whose employment may not continue. Such reductions fall within the scope of the statutory teacher employment and tenure provisions, Section 10-151 of the CT General Statutes. Non-renewal recommendations are applicable to non-tenured teachers and Long Term Replacement teachers. Superintendent Dr. Cialfi conveyed that there are 11 non-renewals, all long term replacement positions. It was moved (Seaman) seconded (Donofrio) that pursuant to the CT General Statutes 10-151, the Trumbull Board of Education non-renew the teaching contracts of the following staff at the end of the 2013-14 school year as recommended by the Superintendent: Terri-Ann Adrian, Makiko Coakley, Todd Harris, Lori Koleszar, Steven Lubin, John Matthews, Robert Monaco, Diane Polacik, Amanda Schaefer, Marion Sperry, and Greg Sullivan and further move that the Superintendent of Schools be directed to communicate this action of the Board in writing to the above-named teachers and that the Superintendent of Schools be authorized to respond on behalf of the Board of Education to any requests which may be forthcoming from these teachers or their representatives pursuant to CT General Statutes 10-151. Vote: Unanimous in favor.
- C. Elementary Enrollment Committee Findings—At this time, Mr. Kerr spoke out from the audience and Mrs. Herbst stated that he was out of order and if he continued speaking, she would ask him to leave. She apologized to the public for this disruption. Dr. Cialfi shared that the consulting firm of Milone and MacBroom was contracted through Cooperative Educational Services (CES) to conduct a study of elementary enrollment in Trumbull. He conveyed the objective of the plan to move forward with shifting of students for the 2014-15 school year is the result of this study. He further stated the objective of the study was to eliminate portables at all elementary schools, prevent overcrowding at schools such as seen this year at Frenchtown, and provide dedicated classrooms for art and music. The Elementary Enrollment Study Committee (members Board Chair Mrs. Herbst, Board Members Mrs. Seaman and Mr. Ward, Assistant Superintendent Dr. McGrath, Trumbull Early Childhood Education Center Director Dr. Wheeler, and PTSA members Mrs. Bartolucci and Mrs. Eisdorfer), has been meeting with consultants from Milone and MacBroom to analyze and review elementary enrollment and make a recommendation to the Board based on the findings of the study. Mr. Zuba and Ms. Augur of Milone and MacBroom gave a thorough power point presentation reviewing the findings of the Committee. Their presentation contained charts of enrollment projections and various scenarios of room utilization at all schools yearly through 2023-24. The following items were reviewed: Study Context which included security concerns with portable classrooms, overcrowding at Frenchtown Elementary School, and concerns for parity in classrooms and program deployment; Existing Conditions—demographics, housing, enrollment

patterns and projections, and classroom facilities; Status Quo—impact of removing portables on facility utilization; Criteria for Alternatives—removal of all portable classrooms at one time, alleviating overcrowding at Frenchtown, enable desired standard room deployment in each elementary school, and minimize student/neighborhood disruption; Standard Program Deployment—prioritizing programming to have dedicated full size classrooms for art, music and a flex room; Alternatives Considered—reviewed redrawing lines for entire district, considered and rejected redistricting Frenchtown neighborhoods close to Middlebrook as it did not sufficiently alleviate overcrowding concerns over the long term, and considered and rejected two scenarios where SRP classrooms would be moved from Frenchtown to Middlebrook or Tashua; Assumptions in Alternatives Analyses—enrollment projections through 2018-19, section needs based on maximum class sizes, and phase in of art, music and flex rooms; Scenario A—removal of portables, dedicated classrooms for art, music and flex, maintenance of SRP Program at Frenchtown, and redistrict Eaves and neighborhood to the East from Frenchtown to Middlebrook (approximately 130 current K-5 students); and Scenario D—removal of portables, dedicated classrooms for art, music and flex, maintenance of SRP Program at Frenchtown, approximately 75 students from Eaves would be transferred to Middlebrook with current 3rd and 4th graders remaining at Frenchtown, and adoption of administrative policy on school assignments in regard to high density residential developments. Mrs. Herbst commented that the challenge when removing portable classrooms is that space is lost and must be replaced. She further commented that the Committee reviewed space availability at all schools and the charge of Committee was to look at the entire district and provide a long range plan with minimal disruption to students. Several times during the presentation, various audience members spoke out and Mrs. Herbst called for order in the room. At the end of the presentation, Mr. Ward commented that the Committee reviewed all six elementary schools, looking at balancing the demographics for five to ten years, limiting disruption to students, eliminating all portable classrooms and providing classroom space for art and music. In response to concerns regarding limited resources/services for students, Mrs. Herbst shared that the Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent has assured the Board that all needed resources/services would be available. She conveyed that the Board's responsibility is for the children, not just redistricting, and Board will deploy the necessary resources to meet any type of need for students. Mrs. Herbst further commented that the Committee gravitated towards Scenario D, especially with the ability of establishing a policy that would allow future Superintendents and Boards of Education to be able to look at highly dense population areas and make informed decisions about incoming students. Dr. Wheeler shared that the first priority of the Committee was to ensure the safety of students by removing portables and equity for all students. Mrs. Bartolucci conveyed that Booth Hill parents also had concerns with this report and how their school will be impacted. Booth Hill Principal Dana Pierce commented that the most pressing concern for his school is the need for a fourth kindergarten class due to enrollment and its impact on classroom space. Dr. Cialfi clarified that the enrollment figures for Frenchtown for October 1, 2013 is 667 students, and the enrollment figures used in Scenarios A and D for 2013-14 reflect as if the movement of those Frenchtown students to Middlebrook had already taken place. He also assured the Board that needed resources/services will be available for all students. Dr. McGrath added that any services a student receives follows the student as opposed to locking a service into a school. He shared that staff would be assigned based on the needs of the students. Dr. McGrath also conveyed that it was in the best interests of students in the SRP program to remain at Frenchtown due to the nature of their disability. Mrs. Herbst asked Dr. Cialfi for a timeline for a Board vote on this issue. Dr. Cialfi responded that it was important that the Board/Administration be cognizant of the concerns raised by parents/community members and noted the longevity of study is most impressive and should address enrollment for the next 5 to 10 years. Mrs. Herbst again thanked parents for speaking this evening and appreciated their input. She commented on the many parental concerns raised this evening and hoped the presentation answered many of their questions. At this time, various audiences members

responded negatively, stating questions have not been answered. Mrs. Herbst responded that there will be a process for answering concerns/questions through the Superintendent's office. An audience member asked for the Board to conduct a Town Hall meeting so parents/community members can have a dialog with Board members on this issue. Other audience members asked various questions and Mrs. Herbst responded that the Committee did review all scenarios and asked that all questions be directed to the Superintendent's office. Mrs. LaFrance asked for kindergarten enrollment figures and a timeframe for providing that information and Dr. Cialfi responded that since kindergarten enrollment is not usually finalized until late summer, a decision on the number of classes needed should not be made at this time. Mrs. LaFrance suggested that all correspondence should be addressed to the Superintendent who will share with the Board for their review and responses will be forthcoming. Mr. Zuba commented that the report will be put on the TPS website and an FAQ can be made available with the report based on the questions asked of the Superintendent and the Board. At this time, when more audience members began speaking out, Mrs. Herbst called for order and again said that any comments/questions be conveyed to the Superintendent.

Agenda Item V – Receive and File

These items were received and filed.

Agenda Item VI -- Other

There was no business under this agenda item.

Adjournment

Board Members gave unanimous consent to adjourn the Public Session at 8:20 p.m.