

TRUMBULL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
TRUMBULL, CONNECTICUT
Regular Meeting – February 17, 2015
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
L. Chory, Vice Chairperson
R. Seaman, Secretary
J. Donofrio, Board Member
S. LaFrance, Board Member
J. Peddle, Board Member (arrived at 7:10 p.m.)

Members absent:

M. Ward, Board Member

Agenda Item I – Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 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 emails and letters from parents regarding the proposed Trumbull High School (THS) World Color Guard and Winter Percussion trips. Board Chair Mrs. Herbst asked for a motion to add discussion regarding these trips to the agenda at this time. It was moved (Chory) seconded (Seaman) to add approval of the THS GEMB World Color Guard and Winter Percussion trips to the agenda and take this item at this time. Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Approval/THS GEMB World Color Guard and Winter Percussion Competition Trips— Per Board policy, all trips in which students would miss two or more school days must be approved by the Board of Education. Superintendent Dr. Cialfi commented that the THS band has participated in these competitions in the past and Trumbull High School Band Director Peter Horton is available to review the trips and answer Board questions. Mrs. Herbst commented that approval of these trips was not placed on the original agenda because the request did not meet the 90 day timeline. She acknowledged that both programs bring pride to the District and the Board would consider the students in granting approval. Mr. Horton apologized to the Board for not submitting the request in a timely manner and expressed appreciation to the Board for their understanding and consideration. Mr. Horton conveyed that the Winter Color Guard and Winter Percussion groups have participated in this national competition for the past 12 years and both teams have made the finals in the past 8 years. THS Winter Color Guard Championships, to be held in Dayton, Ohio from April 15 to April 19, 2015, occurs during the April vacation and no school time would be used. This trip would enable students to participate in preliminary, semi-finals and finals of this event. Mr. Horton also requested Board permission for THS Winter Percussion students to participate in the preliminary, semi-finals, and finals of the Winter Percussion Championships in Ohio from April 8 to April 12, 2015. Three school days would be missed. Students on both trips will have the opportunity to observe other programs from across the country. Considerable discussion ensued regarding policy

being followed especially with regard to the submission of overnight field trips to the Board at least 90 days before the scheduled trip. Mrs. Herbst commented that the Board expects all teachers and administrators to be cognizant of fulfilling all requirements and following Board policy when planning field trips. Discussion ensued regarding chaperone costs and Mr. Horton responded that he attends both trips with parents serving as chaperones and handling supervision and equipment duties. He conveyed that chaperones pay for one-half of the costs, with the remaining funds coming from the THSGEMB Parents Association, and the Association handles all travel arrangements for the trips. Also discussed was the need for additional supplementary information, such as hotel accommodations, method of travel, itinerary, emergency contact numbers, etc. Mrs. Herbst emphasized the importance of back up information accompanying all requests for field trips and following all policy guidelines. Mr. Horton was asked to submit all back up information (hotel, method of travel, itinerary, emergency contact numbers, etc.) regarding these trips to Dr. Cialfi. Following discussion, it was moved (Peddle) seconded (Seaman) to approve the THSGEMB World Color Guard and Winter Percussion trips to Ohio as presented. Vote: unanimous in favor.

- C. Comments –Scott Kerr spoke on behalf of the Band parents and students and thanked the Board for their support of the trips to Ohio. He also invited Board members to the Winter Percussion show on February 28th and World Color Guard Show on April 11th, both to be held at Trumbull High School. Bill Hnatuk spoke in support of THS Band Director Peter Horton and explained that the Band Parents’ organization has recently been reorganized which contributed to the lateness of the trip request. He thanked the Board for their consideration and support. Jen Kehley, PTA representative to the Calendar Committee spoke in support of the proposed 2015-16 school calendar.

Agenda Item III – Consent Agenda

- A. Personnel – Superintendent Dr. Cialfi reported there were no changes since the last Board meeting.
- B. Approval/Minutes – Regular Meeting – 2/3/15 It was moved (Donofrio) seconded (Chory) to approve the minutes as presented. Vote: Unanimous in favor.
- C. Textbook “*Imaginez*”, French IV, French IV Honors—Mrs. LaFrance asked that this agenda item and Agenda Item III-D be removed from the Consent Agenda and added to Reports/Action Items. Mrs. Seaman proposed that the approvals of Agenda Items C and D be tabled until the Board Attorney could be consulted regarding removal of items from the Consent Agenda. It was moved (Seaman) seconded (Peddle) to table Agenda Items III-C and III-D. Vote: 5 in favor (Chory, Donofrio, Herbst, Peddle, Seaman) 1 opposed (LaFrance). Motion passes.
- D. Curriculum Guide, U.S. Political Systems, CP, ACP, Honors—This item was tabled per the motion in Agenda Item III-C.

Agenda Item IV—Reports/Action Items

- A. Approval/THS Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA) Trip to Orlando, Florida—THS C-House Principal Todd Manuel spoke on behalf of Business Department Chair Debra Owen, Advisor to DECA. He conveyed that THS DECA Club members recently qualified to compete at the International Career Development Conference (ICDC). This conference is scheduled for Friday, April 24 through Tuesday, April 28, 2015 in Orlando, Florida. In addition to competitive events, students and advisors participate in a variety of leadership and career workshops. It was noted that while the request for this trip came less than the 90-day requirement, THS Principal Marc Guarino sent a letter to the Board asking for a waiver of the requirement. Students qualified for this conference less than 90 days prior and some additional students may qualify when they have completed preliminary competition which is taking place late February. Mr. Manuel thanked the

Board for their support. It was moved (Chory) seconded (Seaman) to approve the THS DECA Club trip to Orlando, Florida, 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.

- B. Approval/THS Model Congress Trip to the University of Pennsylvania—THS Social Studies teacher and Model Congress Advisor Katie Boland shared details of a proposed trip to the University of Pennsylvania to participate in the Penn Model Congress 2015. The trip will provide the opportunity for students to debate topics, learn first-hand about government and take part in congressional-type committee workshops. This club is sponsored by the ACE Foundation. Discussion ensued regarding the waiver of the 90-day requirement. It was noted that Mr. Guarino sent a letter to the Board asking for a waiver of the requirement due to extenuating circumstances. Also noted was that all proper paperwork (i.e. itinerary, costs, overnight and travel accommodations, etc.) accompanied the field trip request. Ms. Boland thanked the Board for their support of this request. It was moved (Peddle) seconded (Chory) to approve the THS Model Congress trip to the University of Pennsylvania, 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.
- C. Policy/Second Reading, Approval/Interscholastic Athletic Tryouts, Policy Code 5151—Dr. Cialfi reviewed changes to the policy concerning coaches communicating to prospective players. Wording was changed to reflect that coaches must communicate that they are available to meet with student athletes and/or their parents/guardians to discuss tryout results. Athletic Director Michael King commented that there are guidelines regarding timelines and communications to prospective players and coaches have the latitude as to the method of communication. Considerable discussion ensued regarding the various methods of communication to be used and how it will be monitored, and if wording regarding such should be included in policy. Mrs. Seaman suggested that communication procedures be kept internally and do not need to be included in policy. Mrs. LaFrance suggested that communication procedures be consistent for all coaches/teams. Mr. Guarino commented that he and Mr. King understand Board concerns and assured the Board that they will work with coaches to ensure that communication procedures are consistent. Following discussion, it was moved (Chory) seconded (Seaman) to approve Interscholastic Athletic Tryouts, Policy Code 5151 as presented. Vote: Unanimous in favor.
- D. Policy/First Reading, Field Trips, Policy Code 6153—Mrs. Frillici shared that upon the request of the Board of Education, the Policy Committee thoroughly reviewed this policy. Input was garnered from building principals and the Board’s attorney. Mrs. Frillici conveyed that the Committee researched other district policies and found that many districts separate field trips by type, i.e. day trips, overnight trips and international trips. Due to various concerns, it was suggested that approval for international trips be removed from the policy. Mrs. Frillici reviewed all the changes and Dr. McGrath commented that the policy will require Board approval for all overnight trips. Considerable discussion ensued. Board members suggested the following revisions: define “itinerary” and “international”; address academic competitions (overnight) due to timing of requests and seeking waiver of 90-day requirement; adding a form for waivers of the 90-day requirement; giving authority to the Superintendent to approve a sports/academic competition trip if it cannot come before the Board before the event takes place; including a cap on total trip costs with costs above the cap negotiated through the Business Manager. Mrs. Frillici commented that wording regarding the educational value of field trips was added and request forms have been revised to include a statement on the educational relevance to curriculum/content standards for all field trips. She reviewed the request forms for both day and overnight trips. Mrs. Seaman commented that the

previous Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) had done considerable work to revise the medical and physical disabilities' guidelines which the current committee left in place and thanked PAC for their efforts. Mrs. LaFrance questioned the removal of Board approval for international trips from the policy. Considerable discussion ensued regarding international trips, their value, world unrest, safety concerns and Board liability. Mrs. Herbst asked Cindy Katske, a member of the Policy Committee, to share Committee discussion on international trips. Mrs. Katske commented that there was no discussion regarding international trips as it was presented to the Committee that the Board wanted approval of international trips removed from the policy. Mrs. Katske further commented that she would like the Policy Committee to do more research with area districts regarding international trips. Mrs. Herbst commented that while the Board may not sponsor international trips, teachers can organize trips for students for which they would be fully responsible. Mr. Donofrio shared that while the Board realizes the educational value of such trips, it does not have the ability to evaluate/assess international field trips with regard to safety and security. Both Mrs. Herbst and Dr. Cialfi commented that the Board's attorney advised that security/safety concerns should be considered when approving international trips and that many districts were moving away from sponsoring those trips. Mrs. Herbst polled Board members regarding the elimination of international trips with most in agreement and others wanting more detailed information about security/safety risks, Board liability, etc., before making a decision. More discussion ensued regarding international trips and the Committee was asked to do more research/work on this issue. Mrs. Seaman commented that all trip chaperones must comply with Board policy on Volunteers and Mrs. Herbst asked the Superintendent to obtain a written opinion on international trips from the Board's attorney. This policy will be returned to the Board for a second reading and approval.

- E. Review of Potential Move to Pharmacy Coalition—Business Manager Sean O'Keefe conveyed that the district is exploring a potential move to the Connecticut Public Sector Purchasing Coalition Pharmacy Plan, which the Town recently joined. To determine the financial impact of joining the Coalition, Mr. O'Keefe requested the District's Insurance Consultant, Steve Rinaldi, to perform a detailed comparative analysis between the Coalition and Anthem contract terms. Mr. O'Keefe commented that the analysis was reviewed by Terry DeMattie of Segal Consulting, a firm that regularly performs similar analyses for other Towns and Boards of Education considering a move to the Coalition. Mr. Rinaldi reviewed the analysis [hard copy given to the Board] and explained that the District could save approximately \$72,000 by moving to the Coalition. He conveyed that certain drugs could move from "Preferred" (\$25 co-pay) to "Non-Preferred" (\$40 or more co-pay) and that approximately 9% to 10% of those covered by Board insurance (employees and their dependents) would be negatively impacted. Mr. Rinaldi disclosed that by moving to the Coalition, it would preclude the District from pursuing a "HDHP/HSA" plan as Anthem currently does not offer such a program without the pharmacy portion. Mr. Peddle suggested getting more information and analyzing data on the Town's experience over three months before deciding to move to the Coalition. He commented that there are "soft" costs associated with such a move, including possible bargaining unit grievances and other ancillary items, which could offset savings. Mr. Rinaldi conveyed that there are advantages by having both plans under one vendor with regard to insurance cost and the sharing of patient information. It was noted that bargaining units would be part of the discussion if the Board decides to move forward with this initiative. Mrs. Herbst commented that she was concerned about the potential "equal to or better" issue with the bargaining units and asked Mr. O'Keefe if he knew of any union issues on the Town side. Mr. O'Keefe reported that he had heard of one complaint from the Police Union. He conveyed that he will contact Town Labor Relations Director Jim Haselkamp in April 2015 to obtain definitive savings data from the Town after their first 90 days as members of the Coalition.

- F. Approval/2015-16 School Calendar—Dr. McGrath conveyed that the calendar committee met and worked collaboratively to establish the 2015-16 school calendar. The members of the Committee include: Michael Ward, Board Member; Dr. Michael McGrath, Central Administration; Rita McDougald-Campbell and Anthony Pijar, Trumbull Administrators' Association; Tammy Baillargeon and Jane Kluspes, Trumbull Educators' Association; Jen Kehley and Ann Eisdorfer, PTA Council; Joanne Sloan, School Nurse; JoAnne Weiss, Trumbull Administrative Support Services; and Emma Thornton and Michael Zabin, Student Representatives. Dr. McGrath shared that the 2015-16 calendar closely replicates Cooperative Educational Services (CES) regional calendar with the first teacher day scheduled for August 27 and first student day on September 1, 2015. He reviewed other important calendar dates and noted the tentative last day of school is scheduled for June 14, 2016 with 7 snow/make up days to be added in June. It was moved (Peddle) seconded (Donofrio) to approve the 2015-16 school calendar as presented. Vote: Unanimous in favor.
- G. Middle School Configuration Study—Dr. Cialfi shared that the District is considering a long range study of the feasibility of restructuring the grade level configuration of the two middle schools. The study would include the impact of educational benefits for students. Dr. Cialfi conveyed that the impetus for this initiative was prompted by the recent enrollment study and the success of limited redistricting and shared this idea has been explored in past years. He commented that a committee will be formed in the near future to address this initiative.

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 8:56 p.m.