

TRUMBULL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
TRUMBULL, CONNECTICUT
Regular Meeting – April 30, 2019
Long Hill Administration Building
Lorraine R. Smith Assembly Room

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

Members present:

L. Chory, Chairman

L. Timpanelli, Vice Chair

J. Norcel, Secretary

J. Donofrio

K. Fearon

M. Petitti

M. Ward

Agenda Item I—Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Donofrio moved to add to the agenda an Executive Session to discuss a personnel issue relating to the Frenchtown Principal. Mrs. Petitti seconded. Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Mr. Donofrio moved to go into Executive Session at 7:01 p.m. for the purpose of discussing a personnel issue relating to the Frenchtown Principal. Mrs. Petitti seconded. The Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent McGrath were invited into Executive Session. Vote: Unanimous in favor.

The Board unanimously moved to come out of Executive Session at 7:30 p.m.

Agenda Item II—Preliminary Business

A. Pledge of Allegiance - The Public Session began with a salute to the Flag.

The Board asked for a moment of silence on the passing of Dick Seaman; husband of Rosemary Seaman, former Hillcrest Principal and Board Member. Dick was a longtime member of our school community and served on various town boards and commissions.

It was moved (Donofrio) and seconded (Timpanelli) to move Agenda Item III-Reports/Action Items-C Personnel to this portion of the meeting. Vote: Unanimous in favor.

A. Personnel Report

Dr. Cialfi reported that there would only be three certified resignations/retirements requiring board action as Laura Cretella, notified Dr. Cialfi just prior to the start of the meeting that she was withdrawing her resignation and he accepted it. The item was removed from the agenda and no action was required by the Board.

Ashley Kochan, special education teacher at Trumbull High School since August 2016, resigning effective June 30, 2019.

Gail Tuohy, grade 1 teacher at Frenchtown Elementary School since August 1994, retiring effective June 30, 2019.

Carla Volpe, art teacher at Frenchtown Elementary School since August 2016, resigning effective June 30, 2019.

It was moved (Timpanelli) and seconded (Donofrio) to accept these three resignations as presented. Vote: Unanimous in favor.

- B. Recognition – Prudential Spirit Community Award Finalist, Srishti Pithadia
Trumbull High School senior Srishti Pithadia was selected as one of the top runners-up in the 2019 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards in Connecticut for her volunteerism. Srishti founded “TechnoTeens” which is an organization to make computers accessible to all middle and high school students, especially girls and students from low-income backgrounds. Srishti also teaches programming, develops curriculum to support teachers and maintains the organization’s online presence. Prudential representative, Dhilan Shah, was in attendance to present the 2019 Prudential Spirit of Community bronze medallion to Srishti Pithadia.

The entire Board commended Srishti Pithadia on this outstanding achievement.

- C. Recognition – THS World Language/COLT Poetry Contest/Trip to Canada
World Language teachers Susanna Lavorgna Lye and Maria Manso Garcia reported that 31 students competed at the statewide COLT recitation contest where students were judged on fluency and their presentation of published classical poetry in 8 different languages. THS placed first in the state with a total of 22 medals. Students recited their poems to the Board that were awarded gold medals at the competition. Shaun Liebskind led 40 World Language students on a tour of Quebec and Montreal where students visited historic landmarks: Notre-Dame, Montmorency Falls, the Bell Centre and the Olympic Park Stadium. Students were able to experience true French culture while speaking French and even got to enjoy authentic Canadian sports - snowshoeing and dogsledding.
- D. Correspondence – The following people wrote letters to the Board concerning the resignation of Frenchtown Principal, Mrs. Cretella: Jim Zygmunt; Dave Messler, Ellie Grosso; Angie Jepro, Brian Maher; Jennifer and Jonathan Dizney; Gary Williams; Edward Greenword and Jenn Capasso. Helen Carranza wrote to the Board concerning the non-renewal of Madison Middle School math teacher, Dylan DeNuzzo. The Board received invitations from Frenchtown: May 21- Unveiling of Ben Bells, May 22- Choral Concerts, May 30- Band and String Concert and May 31- Field Day.
- E. Public Comments – The following people spoke on behalf of Frenchtown Principal, Laura Cretella: Ann Savo; Olga Caruso; Ellie Grosso; Kerry Malzewski; Jim Zygmunt; Kate Giannelli, Rachel Dustin, Dana Aponte, Beth Messler, Kira Howell; Corinne Ferreira and Gary Williams. They cited numerous instances of Mrs. Cretella’s integrity and strong leadership and administrative qualities that make her an outstanding principal. All were pleased to hear that Principal Cretella would not be resigning. Several people asked the Board to be transparent about the tenure process and stressed the importance of classroom size and the need for another fifth grade section at Frenchtown.

TEA President, John Mastrianni and the following Trumbull residents/teachers: Kathy Rubano; Jennifer Crawford; Lisa Demshak; Chelsea Rodriguez; John Congdon; Jeanne Malgioglio; Brenda

Windsor; Joy Colon; and Ruth Fontilla spoke about the importance of maintaining our Trumbull Schools commitment to excellence by not cutting teachers. Our teachers remain our most important asset and they are the key factor to student success. They urged the Board to reconsider the budget allocation and maintain our current teaching staff.

Trumbull parents Penny Ploski and Lisa Bhasirahy asked to be better informed about grade 9 placement tests and would like the process to be improved for better student outcomes.

Board Member Mike Ward called for a five minute recess.

F. Board Chairman Report –Mrs. Chory reported on the following:

- March 28 BOE Presentation to the Board of Finance
- April 3 Meeting with First Selectman, Facilities Consolidation
- April 6 Board of Finance Public Hearing
- April 7 THS Choir Performance at Lincoln Center
- April 8 Board of Finance Budget Vote
- April 27 Town Council Finance Sub-committee Public Hearing

G. Superintendent Report – Dr. Cialfi reported on the following:

- May 6 Vote by Finance Committee of Town Council
- May 9 Adoption of Budget by Town Council
- The Weller Foundation gave six THS students awards/scholarships for independent research projects to promote academic excellence.
- Congratulations to Kyle Beck who is the national recipient of the Daughters of the American Revolution Good Citizen Award.
- Congratulations to the We the People team who won the Northeast Regional Award at the National Competition in Leesburg, Virginia this weekend.

H. Student Board Representatives Report - Daniella Chuka reported on events at THS: fundraising efforts; World Language week; sports updates; registering to vote; on May 2 – Band concert; AP testing is beginning on May 6; and on May 23 - choir concert; the senior class trip and the senior prom.

Agenda Item III—Reports/Action Items

B. Approval/Non-Renewal of Non-Tenured Staff/Long Term Replacements

Prior to May 1 of any given year, the Board of Education is required to non-renew the contracts of non-tenured staff whose employment may not continue. This year, the non-renewal process will include five non-tenured teachers and six long-term replacement (substitute) teachers. The long-term replacement teachers were hired for the 2018-2019 school year in a position of fixed duration. It is the opinion of the Superintendent that the non-renewals recommended are within the scope of the statutory teacher employment and tenure provisions, Section 10-151 of the Connecticut General Statutes; and are consistent with provisions of the TEA Agreement applicable to non-renewals of non-tenured and Long Term Replacement teachers. Also, please note that it may be necessary to revisit this agenda item at a Special Meeting once the final budget numbers are known.

Non-Tenured Faculty

Dylan DeNuzzo (.8) – Hillcrest/Madison Schools
Stephanie Helminger – Daniels Farm Elementary School
Chelsea Rodrigues – Middlebrook Elementary School
Fatima Selimovski (.4) – Madison Middle School

Long Term Replacements

Benjamin Anderson – Madison Middle School
Amanda Cook – Booth Hill Elementary School
Michaela Cutney – Daniels Farm Elementary School
Danielle Gaspar – Madison Middle School
Heewon Lim – Trumbull High School
Maeve Smith – Trumbull High School

It was moved (Ward) and seconded (Petitti) that pursuant to the Connecticut General Statutes 10-151, the Trumbull Board of Education non-renew the teaching contracts of the above staff at the end of the 2018-2019 school year as recommended by the Superintendent 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 Connecticut General Statutes 10-151. Vote: Unanimous in favor.

C. Approval/Minutes – Regular Meeting 3/26/2019

It was moved (Norcel) and seconded (Timpanelli) to approve the minutes of the March 26, 2019 Board of Education meeting as presented. Vote: Unanimous in favor.

D. 2019 – 2020 Budget Update-Dr. Cialfi

The Board Chairman opened the Budget Discussion with comments (see attached).

Dr. Cialfi and Mr. O’Keefe discussed the current status of the 2019 – 2020 Board of Education budget which is at 2.0%, approved by the Board of Finance on March 28, 2019. This represents a \$2.38 million reduction from the board’s originally approved 4.30% status. Key factors that must be considered in this reduction were discussed. The Finance Committee of the Town Council reviewed the BOE Budget on April 25 and their voting session is scheduled for May 6. The full Town Council will also meet on May 6 and again on May 9 for the adoption of the budget.

E. Approval/Excess Cost Grant Request to Town

Mr. O’Keefe presented for Board approval the transfer of the 2018-2019 Special Education Excess Cost Grant in the amount of \$1,222,153 and the Excess Cost Grant – Prior Year Adjustment in the amount of \$295,708 for a total of \$1,517,861. These funds are to be applied to the Board’s Special Education accounts that are exceeding budget in 2018-2019.

It was moved (Donofrio) and seconded (Timpanelli) to send a letter to the Town formally requesting that the full amount of both the Special Education Excess Cost Grant and Prior Year Adjustment be made available to the Board of Education. Vote: Unanimous in favor.

F. Curriculum Committee Report

Approval/Curriculum Textbook

Dr. Budd presented the following textbook:

1. *Advanced Placement European History* (Core: Advanced Placement European History)

It was moved (Petitti) and seconded (Timpanelli) to approve the above curriculum textbook as presented. Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Adjournment

Board Members gave unanimous consent to adjourn the Public Session at 9:54 p.m.

Board Chairman - Opening Comments, Budget Discussion

April 30, 2019

I would like to thank all the parents, residents, members of the TEA, TAA and other staff members who are here tonight or who emailed us for your comments concerning the budget. As you know, the Board of Education fully supported the superintendent's budget request, in fact, we increased it to account for additional funding needed for insurance. Our request was reduced about \$2.4 million by the First Selectman. That reduction was left unchanged with a 4-2 bi-partisan vote of the Board of Finance. While the budget is still in the hands of the Town Council, by charter, the council does not have the authority to raise our budget beyond the level submitted by the First Selectman.

First Selectman Tesoro has indicated her willingness to support a supplemental appropriation to the board should Hartford vote not to implement ESC funding cuts... and we thank her for that. Also, while I personally have not heard her mention whether or not she would be willing to do the same should the Governor's plan to send Teacher Pension costs to the town not pass, I do hope that she will consider that also.

In either case, or neither case, this board needs to move forward with development of a plan to allocate anticipated expenditures down to the level of funding that we realistically have to work with today... and unfortunately that means we need to reduce line items in our 2019-2020 budget by \$2.4mm.

Here's the process I'd like to follow:

First of all, we will not be voting on any reductions tonight. Tonight, Dr. Cialfi and his team will be presenting a general list of items that they are considering for cuts, before submitting a final recommendation list in late May. You'll hear about some savings in areas such as classroom supplies, # of copiers and use of some propane powered buses... and he also has some recommendations for fee increases to Pay-to-Participate and perhaps a student parking fee at the high

school... but the remainder, which none of us should be surprised to hear about, is a reduction of both certified and non-certified staff.

Board members, as I've mentioned at several previous meetings, we want to hear your opinions of Dr.Cialfi's list and please, make suggestions for any other areas that you would like him to consider. As always, we welcome public comments from our residents and staff or if you would prefer to email us, please use our board email boardofed@trumbullps.org so that your comments reach all of us.

The Town Council's budget vote is May 9th so I think it will work best if we get another update from Dr.Cialfi at our May 14th meeting and vote on specific reductions at that our May 28th meeting. Any questions?

The floor is yours Dr.Cialfi...