

**WESTBROOK BOARD OF EDUCATION
Tuesday, November 11, 2014 @ 7:00 p.m.
Regular Board of Education Meeting**

MINUTES

Present: Maureen Westbrook, Marti White, Michelle Palumbo, Lee Bridgewater, Dee Adorno, Kim Walker, Jackie Lyman, Sally Greaves

Absent: Pat Labbadia

Also Present: Patricia A. Ciccone, Superintendent; Ruth Rose, Cori DiMaggio, Administrators; Madeline Illinger, Director of Special Education and Student Services; Lesley Wysocki, Business Manager; parents, students

I. CALL TO ORDER – The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Maureen Westbrook, Chair.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. BOARD OF EDUCATION ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: CAPSS Superintendent Awards. Erik Simon Vuoritie and Lydia Murphy were recognized by the Superintendent's organization, CAPSS, for leadership, scholarship, and community service. Superintendent Ciccone gave a description of each of the student's achievements and activities, which led to their selection for this award. These students were presented with a certificate of recognition and will be honored at a luncheon on December 1 at the Saybrook Point Inn.

IV. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT – Lydia Murphy reported on high school activities including fall sports achievements and club activities. Lydia reported on the Veterans' Day assembly and reception and the upcoming assembly on Good Decision Making, the musical *Sweet Charity* on November 20, 21 and 22, National Honor Society Induction Ceremony on November 24 and parent/teacher conferences on November 13.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT Re: Matters of General Concern & Agenda Items

A. Mary Ann Clark – Empty Bowls

Mary Ann Clark spoke about the Empty Bowls Project. Many of the bowls created by staff, students and community members were on display. Mary Ann reported that the participation has been more than expected. There is another glazing session scheduled for November 22 at the Westbrook Public

Library from 12-2 pm featuring pies from Rose Orchards, and at the Senior Center on December 11. The project will culminate in a soup dinner fundraiser to help end hunger on January 28.

VI. Approval of Minutes:

1. Regular Meeting – October 14, 2014: Moved by Lee Bridgewater and seconded by Jackie Lyman to approve the minutes of October 14, 2014. (Ayes) M. Westbrook, M. White, M. Palumbo, D. Adorno, K. Walker, J. Lyman, L. Bridgewater (Abstained) S. Greaves

VII. NEW BUSINESS: Vote anticipated

- A. Field Trip Request – WHS** French teacher, Lisa Finnegan, requested approval for approximately 15 high school students to explore Quebec, Canada from February 16-19, 2015. The cost is approximately \$1035 per student. They will travel by coach bus and will be chaperoned, depending on the number of students, by the appropriate number of staff members. The Board was given an itinerary for their review and Mrs. Finnegan was present to answer questions. She stated that the students will focus on the history aspect of the trips. *Moved by Lee Bridgewater and seconded by Dee Adorno to approve the field trip request to Quebec, Canada from February 16-19, 2015 by the WHS French students. Vote unanimous.*

VIII. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- A.** The Superintendent reported enrollment for November 1, 2014 is 808 students (801 in-district students and 7 out-placed). She reported that she is on a committee that has been researching trends and how a number of alternative schools such as charter schools, etc. are impacting enrollments at public schools. She will speak more about this at a future board meeting.
- B.** Calendar 2015-16, 2016-17. Several versions of the calendar were discussed. The Board was given several options to review which included 181 days with a two day February break, 181 days with a full week of February vacation, 185 days with a shortened February break and 185 days with a full February vacation. The 185 days includes built-in snow days which allow for concluding the school year earlier should there be no need for the extra days. The discussion included comments regarding the impact of vacations on SBAC. The Superintendent indicated that the calendar options follow the guidelines of the More Commission recommendation and statutory changes. It was determined that the options be put on the website and that two versions will be brought back to the Board for discussion and a vote.
- C.** China/Westbrook Exchange – Information and survey results regarding the China/Westbrook exchange were presented. In an effort to determine interest and the future of the Westbrook/China Exchange program, the Superintendent conducted a survey of the school community. A PowerPoint presentation provided information given from 115 participants; the high

school being the largest group to partake in the survey. Ultimately, 65% of those taking the survey indicated they would like to see the program continue, but only 15% considered coordinating the program or becoming an exchange professional. Mrs. Bishop was present and put together a chronological timeline of past trips. Ginny White, kindergarten teacher, presented her support of the program. The Superintendent concluded that the survey indicates people are interested and also showed the need to generate more awareness and participation. Ruth Rose suggested the program is all about relationships and if people are interested, but perhaps can't get involved due to financial restraints, some sort of fundraising should be considered. It was agreed that participation from the high school level would be beneficial. *It was moved by Sally Greaves and seconded by Marti White that the Board approve the initial effort to generate interest for a plan to move forward to continue the Westbrook/China Exchange. Vote unanimous.*

- D. Administrator Roles: Superintendent Ciccone talked about the role of the administrators at BOE meetings. She commented that although we enjoy hearing about school events, the Board would like to hear about substantive things taking place within the schools. In regard to that, Madeline Illinger will be talking about attendance, Ruth Rose on instructional math and Cori DiMaggio on Professional Development. Tara Winch will speak on NEASC at the December meeting.

Maureen Westbrook suggested placing the Administrators' Comments at the beginning of the agenda and placing approval of minutes and financials at the end of the agenda.

- E. Security Construction Update: Superintendent Ciccone mentioned that this item will be tabled for the next meeting.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Policies: Second Reading: The following policies were brought before the Board at the October 14 meeting and changes discussed. This is the second reading and a vote will be taken to approve of the changes:

1. 5131.914 – School Climate
2. 3541 – Transportation
3. 1110.1 – Community Relations/Parent Involvement

Moved by Marti and seconded by Kim Walker to approve the revisions in Policy 5131.914 and 1110.1. Vote unanimous. It was suggested changes to Policy 3541 be made to refer to a child's grade rather than age throughout the policy and to reference the safety issue under Walking Guidelines. Those changes will be made and brought back to the Board in December.

X. ADMINISTRATOR(S) COMMENTS:

- A. Madeline Illinger gave a PowerPoint presentation on school attendance and how it relates to learning, starting in the lower grades and throughout high

- school. She talked about why we track chronic absenteeism and how it helps to identify students who need interventions and support services. Westbrook stands at a 4.5% absenteeism rate which is low in comparison to surrounding school districts. She introduced Corey Ehrlich, Social Worker, and her role in helping and working with families to get students in school. Corey said that her job is to make personal connections with families. She has worked with both the middle school and the high school, noting that students on the list last year at the middle school level who were chronically absent are not on the high school list this year. Corey will be working with Daisy next year.
- B. Ruth Rose talked about Daisy Math Night, a family learning experience. She drew parallels from the activities of the night to the current thinking on teaching strategies. She also mentioned the 2nd annual Trick or Trot's success.
 - C. Cori DiMaggio gave an update on the November 4 professional development activities. Heather Doucette (CREC) presented to administrators, math, ELA, and special education teachers on information related to assessment and data team training. Deb Brennan (CREC) presented on a new Writing Workshop Program at daisy. Science teachers heard from Steve Curry on Common Core and its impact on middle/high school science curriculum. Science teachers collaborated with science teachers from other districts in the afternoon. World Language focused on work on revising curriculum. Unified Arts and pupil personnel staff attended a variety of regional professional development workshops. Social Studies PLCs got together to review curriculum and in the afternoon met with Steve Armstrong, Social Studies Consultant for the State Board of Education.

XI. FINANCIAL REPORTS:

- A. Review of Check Listing: Board members reviewed check listings for October 9, 2014 in the amount of \$154,997.80 and for October 23, 2014 in the amount of \$122,294.83.
- B. Budget Narrative/Review of Expenditure Report: Mrs. Wysocki provided an overview of the budget, stating that she is unconcerned at this point.
- C. Line Item Transfers were provided.
- D. Insurance Report - The September insurance report was reviewed.

XII. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Policy– M. White reported there will be a meeting on November 20. The Superintendent will provide policies to the committee prior to the meeting.
- B. Communications : Jackie Lyman talked about the committee's discussion on use of the website, having more visibility in the community by attending events and writing articles for the Westbrook Events magazine.
- C. Long Range Planning – A meeting is scheduled for December 9.
- D. Insurance- There is no meeting scheduled.

- E. Negotiations - Sally Greaves reported Negotiations are progressing.
- F. PTO Representatives – Topics discussed at the middle school PTO included roles of school counselors and psychologist. Irene Duncan talked about sixth grade activities. Dana Runkle talked about advisory groups.

XIII. PERSONNEL: No report.

XIV. ADJOURN: Moved by Lee Bridgewater and seconded by Jackie Lyman to adjourn at 9:13 p.m. Vote unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Walker, Board Secretary

Cecilia S. Lester, Board Recording Clerk