

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 15, 2013**

A special meeting of the Enfield Board of Education was held at Town Hall in Council Chambers, located at 820 Enfield Street, Enfield, CT on January 15, 2013.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 6:35 PM by Chairman Neville.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Chairman Neville
3. **FIRE EVACUATION ANNOUNCEMENT:** Chairman Neville announced the fire evacuation announcement.
4. **ROLL CALL:**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Peter Jonaitis, Tina LeBlanc, Vin Grady, Donna Szewczak, Joyce Hall, Tom Sirard, Jen Rancourt and Timothy Neville

MEMBERS ABSENT: Kevin Fealy

ALSO PRESENT: Dr. Jeffrey Schumann, Superintendent; Mr. Christopher Drezek, Deputy Superintendent; Ms. Anne McKernan, Chief Academic Officer; Nathan Hale Principal, Mrs. LeAnn Beaulieu; Enfield Street Principal, Mrs. Deborah Berger; Hazardville Memorial Principal, Mrs. Bonnie Mazzoli and Henry Barnard Principal, Mrs. Nancy Hayes

5. **2013-14 Budget Discussion (6:35 PM – 7:30 PM)**

Chairman Neville stated Board members will hear a presentation regarding full day Kindergarten and Board Goal #3.

Dr. Schumann added Board members have been given copies of the Budget Meeting Calendar. Some of the locations for the special meetings will need to be decided upon since both Council Chambers and the Enfield Room are already being used. Board members have also been provided magnet school numbers. Tonight we will begin our discussion related to Board Goal #3 – Full Day Kindergarten.

Mr. Drezek stated full day Kindergarten is an extremely important topic for the Board's consideration. We felt the need to present the reasons why we should have full day Kindergarten. Tonight you will hear the first presentation regarding this and the second presentation related to full day Kindergarten will be held on Tuesday, January 22nd. The plan and proposal for full day Kindergarten will be discussed next week.

Ms. McKernan invited the K-2 Elementary Principals to join her. She thanked the Board for inviting them to tonight's meeting and are pleased to present this information regarding full day Kindergarten.

Ms. McKernan reviewed Board Goal #3 - To embark on a quest to identify the best strategy(s) for implementation of a full day Kindergarten program in the Enfield Public Schools. She reviewed the Theory of Action – If the Enfield Public Schools affords all students with a full day Kindergarten program, then student achievement will improve and our learners will become better prepared for their academic careers.

Ms. McKernan stated that each of the K-2 Principals will speak in-depth about the theory of action in a day-to-day basis.

Enfield Street Principal, Mrs. Deborah Berger reviewed research from the National Research Council. We have a window of opportunity to teach our students. Investment in early childhood will save you money in the long run. We have recently submitted a grant for a 3 to 3 Initiative (age 3 to grade 3). Students come to us in all various levels. Some students know their numbers and alphabet and some are not prepared. Full day Kindergarten instruction time would double. Students would be able to use the skills taught throughout the day. The additional time will allow for exploration, experimentation and application of skills resulting in a stronger foundation in English language arts, reading, writing, listening and speaking.

Henry Barnard K-2 Principal Mrs. Nancy Hayes reviewed the expectations for Kindergarteners. She reviewed CCSS Reading Standards, foundational skills, reading literature, information text and what a Kindergarten student will master. She reviewed the writing standards (writing samples), speaking, listening and language skills Kindergarten students will master.

Nathan Hale K-2 Principal Mrs. LeAnn Beaulieu reviewed the school readiness skills for Kindergarteners. She reviewed self regulation skills and stated they are the biological foundation for school readiness. A self regulated student will have the ability to stay on task; ignore distractions; remember on purpose; focus; hold and work with information in their mind; hold two strategies in the mind at the same time; develop self discipline; pay attention and be motivated to achieve.

Mrs. Beaulieu stated full day Kindergarten teachers will have time to use part of each day to explicitly teach self regulation skills; practice with self regulated learning will be imbedded into research based math and reading instruction; and children will have time to participate in intentional creative and dramatic play as an activity to help them develop important cognitive skills.

Hazardville Memorial PK-2 Principal Mrs. Bonnie Mazzoli reviewed the full day Kindergarten vision for excellence in education. All Kindergarten students must meet the same learning standards. Half day Kindergarten students will receive 450 hours of instruction. Full day Kindergarten students will receive 900 hours of instruction. In 2013, 168 of 416 Enfield Kindergarten students had no preschool experience. Full day Kindergarten benefits the students, families, teachers and the community.

Mrs. Mazzoli reviewed the benefits of students that attend full day Kindergarten. Students will meet a higher level of expectations; have additional time to learn; develop social, emotional and behavioral skills; are better prepared for first grade; are less likely to experience grade retention; produce long term gains; experience less stress; are more likely to succeed later in school; have a lower dropout rate in high school and are more prepared for demands of college and career.

Mrs. Mazzoli reviewed the benefits for families, the benefits for teachers and benefits for the community. In conclusion, our students must be prepared to compete with students across our country and in our global society.

Ms. McKernan discussed trends in Kindergarten education. She reviewed the education reform in Connecticut and Governor Malloy's education reform – enhance families access to high quality early childhood education opportunities.

Ms. McKernan stated 76% of Connecticut school districts provide full day Kindergarten. Several districts in this region added full day Kindergarten last year and several districts are planning to implement full day Kindergarten in 2013-14. This is the correct thing to do. The enrichment Kindergarteners will receive will help them succeed as the move from grade to grade. This would be an effective budgetary decision to make because of the gains you will make down the road. Less money will be put into intervention and retention. Our students will be better prepared.

Ms. McKernan stated full day Kindergarten classes are attractive to families. All the magnet schools have full day Kindergarten programs. The Board has made a great move towards excellence in education by supporting the consolidated high school and hopes that the Board will endorse full day Kindergarten.

Chairman Neville thanked them for the presentation.

Mrs. Rancourt asked about half day retention needs with our current program.

Mrs. Beaulieu stated it is hard to quantify that at this time. Fewer students will need retention in Kindergarten because they will have more time to master the skills with a full day Kindergarten program. There will always be some retentions, but she believes it would be less than current retention numbers.

Mrs. Mazzoli stated ELL (English Language Learners) is increasing. Full day Kindergarten would give more time for the students to learn our language.

Ms. Hall stated there has been a full day Kindergarten program at Henry Barnard for several years. She asked Mrs. Hayes if there been a notable difference with the full day Kindergarten students.

Mrs. Hayes stated the full day Kindergarten program has been at Henry Barnard for 8 or 9 years. There is one section of full day Kindergarten and 6 sections of half day Kindergarten classes. There is a difference between the two groups. The full day Kindergarten students are more independent and they use the strategies they have learned throughout the day. She also sees a difference with the parents.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated she supports full day Kindergarten. Some students are ready for full day Kindergarten. Snow days impact the instruction for AM half day Kindergarten students. They are losing valuable learning time. Full day Kindergarten helps the students to transition better. She thanked them for the presentation.

Mr. Grady also thanked them for the presentation and hopes that people seeing this at home will understand why we are asking for full day Kindergarten. There is a huge difference with the students that receive full day Kindergarten instruction. We are taking a pro-active approach with this. He knows eventually we will be mandated by the State to have full day Kindergarten in our schools. This is an initiative we need to start doing. Thank you for the information.

Mr. Jonaitis asked why we did away with full day Kindergarten years ago. Mrs. Mazzoli stated we had a grant through the School Readiness Program at Thomas G. Alcorn that allowed full day Kindergarten and there were also budgetary reasons.

Mr. Jonaitis stated we did have full day Kindergarten in the past that was done away with due to budgetary reasons. Ms. McKernan stated full day Kindergarten went away due to budgetary concerns but the trends now are to have full day Kindergarten.

Mr. Jonaitis stated that full day Kindergarten is not for everyone. Some students will benefit from full day Kindergarten. Other students will benefit no more or no less. Statistics show you cannot see the difference between the students that went to Head Start and students that didn't by the time they are in grade 3. Are we doing something for them at an early age that makes them feel better so they are more successful?

Mrs. Beaulieu stated some students will be successful whether they go to a full day Kindergarten program or not. There are a lot of children that will be less successful in a half day program. No one will be hurt by attending a full day program Kindergarten program.

Mr. Jonaitis stated with the individualization that happens in the lower grades (K, 1 & 2) some students will make leaps and bounds. The students that are prepared will they be held back or will they be pushed to reach further. Gaps will be made.

Mrs. Mazzoli stated that all of the classes have differentiated instruction so the students are grouped and challenged according to their abilities. There are so many diverse students in Kindergarten.

That is why we say our Kindergarten teachers walk on water because they are meeting the needs of so many learners with differentiated instruction.

Mr. Jonaitis stated everything is going to be increased and there will still be a gap. He agrees that Kindergarten teachers are the saints of the world and should be reimbursed more than any college professor.

Mrs. Mazzoli stated when she began teaching in Enfield there were 35 students in one Kindergarten half day session. The new CCSS are phenomenal and the expectations for the children are unbelievable. She encourages you to come and see the changes in the classrooms, it is unbelievable. Without more time, it will make teaching that much more difficult to meet the needs of all learners.

Mr. Jonaitis stated he is not against full day Kindergarten. He does not see how the dropout rates will be affected by having full day Kindergarten or that student's will have better academic success in the upper grades. He is also hearing that there will be fewer problems down the road if we have full day Kindergarten.

Ms. McKernan stated full day Kindergarten is an investment in early education. The statistics mentioned are from studies or reports of children reading by grade 3. Economically disadvantaged students are entering school 12-14 months behind. Those gaps can only be made up with more time. This will give the students the best chance to be reading by grade 3. Reading at level in grade 3 is highly linked to success in high school. Students that can't read to learn by grade 3 are at a significant disadvantage. By the time students are in the middle school, they are reading lots of text information. If students cannot read this they will fall fast and will get further behind.

Mr. Jonaitis stated by grade 3 and 4 you can tell which students will have trouble down the road. Full day Kindergarten was done away with due to budgetary reasons. How many teachers will be needed to implement full day Kindergarten?

Ms. McKernan stated Mr. Drezek will discuss the details for this plan next week.

Mr. Jonaitis stated he is not against full day Kindergarten. We may not be able to afford to have full day Kindergarten at all the primary schools. Some parents may want their children to attend a half day program. We have some great Kindergarten teachers.

Mr. Sirard understands why full day Kindergarten was cut. They were cut for budgetary reasons. He is a product of full day Kindergarten. One of the things he is proud of as a Board of Education member is that we value education in Enfield. Our class sizes are smaller in the lower grades. That has always been our focus with early intervention. The budget is an issue. He personally believes if the budget was better, we would have full day Kindergarten in Enfield.

Ms. Hall stated full day Kindergarten has been on the top of our lists for many years and has been cut due to budgetary reasons.

Ms. Hall stated there has been much discussion on an ungraded school where the students progress from day one at their own rate. When they reach a certain proficiency, they move to another area. They are not called Kindergarten, first grade and second grade. They are achieving what is expected of them in the order which they can do it. This would be very hard to convince the world that this is the way to go.

Ms. Hall asked about the 3 to 3 grant proposal. Mrs. Berger stated they submitted a grant last week and are hoping to hear something by Friday. She has been working with Ms. Witbro, Mrs. Clement, staff at Asnuntuck and some of the daycare providers in town. They are working to find ways to further collaborate to support health and physical well-being, social, emotional and educational development of early children. We are developing a program and a plan to move forward to smooth out the transition from preschool to Kindergarten.

Ms. Hall stated this grant is above and beyond the Graustein grant. Mrs. Berger stated this will be funded by Graustein and goes above and beyond what they are already supporting. They will choose from between 6 to 8 communities and will help us develop a plan.

Ms. Hall asked if the First Readers program made a difference with the students to perform at a higher level than they might have been at.

Mrs. Berger stated the First Readers program has made a huge difference motivating the students. They wear their medals proudly. It is a wonderful program to have a community that celebrates children learning how to read. It is an important benchmark.

Ms. Hall asked about digital technology and the need for it in Kindergarten.

Mrs. Hayes stated we are using Lexia. Lexia has a strong home-school component. Students can practice their phonetic skills and can also do this at home. There is also www.starfall.com that students can use. They can apply the skills learned and this has also been very beneficial for students.

Mrs. Hayes stated we are looking at ways to connect fiction and non-fiction where the students can use their iPads. She will present something about this next month with the teachers from Barnard and the technology being used.

Mrs. Berger added that our kids are in a world full of rich technology. We need to support technology to help them learn.

Mrs. Mazzoli stated we have a cart with 20-30 iPads that are used at Memorial. There are so many applications for just about every kind of learning tool for them to use. The students can't wait to use them. They truly are learning tools. She encouraged Board members to come and see what the students are doing. It is truly phenomenal.

Mrs. Beaulieu stated students are getting a well balanced diet at school. There is a place for technology, books, movement and song.

Mrs. Mazzoli added you should see how quickly they adapt. Ms. Hall asked if they are adapting individually. Mrs. Mazzoli stated both individually and in a group setting. They are sharing and making connections.

Mr. Grady has heard a lot of pro's for full day Kindergarten. We need to remember that we will be mandated to have full day Kindergarten. He would like to see us take a proactive approach stance and start with full day Kindergarten. We do not have to do this all at once. We need to get this started. It is a great program.

Chairman Neville is concerned with the 36% of students not having any preschool experience. He supports full day Kindergarten. His children also attended full day Kindergarten. What can we do with that 36% of students being 10-12 months behind? He also agrees with the grade 3 reading level and can attest to what happens when a student is several years behind when they gets to middle school. Reading is critical. What will this do for the students coming in and what can we do for the students so they are not left out.

Ms. McKernan stated reading skills can be honed and defined. We have windows of opportunity. We need to look at the tiered instruction. How are we delivering education instruction? By doing this it will help us to close the achievement gaps. There will be some learning gaps. Some students will catch up in grade 3. We will continue to look at the most effective ways. The most effective tool we can give our teachers is time to work with the children. We will continue to look for additional ways to work with our children.

Chairman Neville welcomed Representative Kiner for attending tonight's Board meeting. He stated an

important question is about the Kindergarten entrance age. This has been a chronic road block. You can have up to a year difference with some students entering Kindergarten. This is something that will need to be discussed at the legislative level. These are some of the kind of questions you will be asked next week.

Chairman Neville thanked Ms. McKernan, Mrs. Berger, Mrs. Beaulieu, Mrs. Hayes and Mrs. Mazzoli for their presentation. We may have you come back to answer any additional questions.

Chairman Neville stated part II of the budget discussion will be addressed at the January 22, 2013 Board meeting.

6. EXECUTIVE SESSION – THOMPSONVILLE ROOM

- a. Matters Related to the Superintendent’s Evaluation (7:35 PM – 8:30 PM)

Mr. Grady moved, seconded by Mr. Sirard that the Board enters into Executive Session for Matter(s) Related to the Superintendent’s Evaluation at 7:50 PM

The Board reconvened to the Thompsonville Room for the Executive Session. Joining the Board in Executive Session were Dr. Schumann and Mr. Drezek.

The Executive Session ended at 8:55 PM. No Board action occurred while in Executive Session.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Grady moved, seconded by Mrs. Szewczak to adjourn the Special Meeting of January 15, 2013.

All ayes, motion passed unanimously.

Meeting stood adjourned at 8:56 PM.

Donna Szewczak
Secretary
Board of Education

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Zalucki, Recording Secretary