

**BOARD OF EDUCATION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
MARCH 11, 2014**

A regular meeting of the Enfield Board of Education was held at Town Hall in Council Chambers, located at 820 Enfield Street, Enfield, CT on March 11, 2014.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairman Sirard.
2. **INVOCATION OR MOMENT OF SILENCE:** Peter Jonaitis
3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Peter Jonaitis
4. **FIRE EVACUATION ANNOUNCEMENT:** Chairman Sirard announced the fire evacuation announcement.
5. **ROLL CALL:**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Peter Jonaitis, Raymond Peabody, Lori Unghire, David Wawer, Vin Grady, Tina LeBlanc, Timothy Neville, Stacy Thurston and Tom Sirard

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**ALSO PRESENT:** Dr. Jeffrey Schumann, Superintendent and FHS Student Representative Katie Saltzgeber

6. **BOARD GUEST(S)**

a. **KITE Video from 01-28-14 BOE Meeting**

Board members viewed the Kite video from the January 28<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. The video showed interviews with principals, staff members and parents about the benefits of having full day Kindergarten.

7. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Schumann stated that Mr. Drezek is not here tonight because he is at the Aqua Turf where Joe Ravalese, the owner of the Enfield Country Diner is being recognized. He was nominated by Principal Newton as a Friend of Education for all of the volunteer work he has done for the students in Enfield. He is the recipient of this prestigious award as well as some other well deserving members from the State. It is our intent to invite Mr. Ravalese to attend an upcoming Board meeting as a guest for the Board to recognize him. Mr. Drezek is attending this recognition dinner as a representative of the administration.

- a. Student Representatives Report– as presented
- b. Administrative Openings Update – as presented
- c. Revised FY2014-15 School Calendar – as presented
- d. Intermediate Schools Open House – as presented
- e. FHS/EHS Parent Teacher Conferences – as presented
- f. Invention Convention – as presented

Chairman Sirard asked if the revisions to the School Calendar need to be approved by the Board. Dr. Schumann stated no additional Board approval is needed. We did not make any changes to the number of student days. The only changes made were to define conference

nights.

## **8. AUDIENCES**

Karen Weseliza, Renee Lane – Mrs. Weseliza stated she is here tonight as the Kite Chairperson and is available to answer any questions Board members may have regarding the video that was played.

Mr. Neville attended the meeting last Wednesday Kite meeting and was totally impressed by what they do. The room was packed by people in the organization doing what they do best for our students and families.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated that when you attend a Kite meeting, the saying it takes a village to raise a child comes into play. Kite is the village. They are the experts when it comes to early childhood. Kite can help parents with any kind of questions they might have. They have resources available to assist parents. They are truly a dedicated group of individuals.

Mr. Neville was impressed with Dr. Calnan's direction with standardizing developmental skill assessments for children. Collecting standardized data would be extremely helpful.

Mrs. Weseliza stated that all children will see a pediatrician during their childhood. Not every child will attend preschool. We knew that if we engaged the pediatricians, we would have an opportunity to share our early childhood information with them. Some communities will conduct screenings. All children will be welcomed into Kindergarten whether they have preschool experience or not. It is important to know where every child is at when they enter Kindergarten. The burden of education needs to be placed on us and not the children. The pediatricians are working with us as well as other providers trying to give us this information. Dr. Calnan is a proactive member of our Kite collaboration.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated Kite is willing to help you with any age level your child is at. There are so many organizations that are involved in Kite. It is a real community approach.

Mrs. Weseliza stated early childhood learning is from birth to age 8. The brain develops the most from birth to 5 years old. It is important to reach out to them when they are young.

Mr. Peabody recently spoke to a parent that reached out to Kite and used them as a resource. It is important for parents to know there are resources out there for them to use. He appreciates everything you are doing for our parents and students.

Chairman Sirard stated Kite is a wonderful organization. You were chief allies helping us to bring full day Kindergarten into Enfield. You are an example of what is right in Enfield. You represent Enfield at its best.

## **9. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Mr. Jonaitis asked if there has been any movement regarding teachers being allowed to attend meetings as liaisons. Chairman Sirard stated this was just discussed at our Executive Committee and we are in the process of getting the ball rolling about this.

Mr. Jonaitis would like to see the Personnel Committee started again. He would also like to look at the power within the Executive Committee. This should be dispersed amongst the entire Board and not just the Executive Board.

Mr. Jonaitis address some of the current discussion from Washington earmarking \$740 million dollars for pre-K programs across the country. He hopes this doesn't happen.

Mr. Jonaitis has not seen any community input regarding the use of Fermi. Since no one has come to us, you will just need to sit and watch what the committee recommends about Fermi's future.

Mr. Jonaitis would like to know if anyone has looked into early retirement incentives for next year. Chairman Sirard stated this was also discussed during the Executive Committee meeting.

Mr. Jonaitis would like to know if exit interviews for retiring employees were discussed. Chairman Sirard stated this was not discussed. Mr. Jonaitis added this would be an important way to find out information about how we can do things better.

Mr. Jonaitis asked about parents being able to opt out of student testing. Dr. Schumann stated we have been responding to parents that e-mail or send us a note requesting for their child to opt out. Based on the information that we received from our attorneys at Shipman and Goodwin, parents do not have the right to opt out of student testing. We are using a draft letter that was prepared by Attorney Mills when we receive any parent requests.

Mr. Jonaitis stated Simsbury, Farmington and other towns are allowing parents the option to opt out. Dr. Schumann stated we are following the advice of our attorney.

Mr. Jonaitis added that he mentioned the administration helping out with elementary evaluations at the last meeting. Has the administration considered this option? If you haven't, he would like you to seriously consider this. Dr. Schumann added this is something we can discuss.

Mr. Peabody stated he will attend the Common Core hearing at the State Capital on Wednesday, March 12<sup>th</sup>. He will present data on the impact common core has on the town of Enfield. He will address the financial impact with our legislatures on the Education Committee. He is concerned about the shrinking grand list compared to a few years ago. He is concerned with the new curriculum requirements and evaluations. If the State reneges on their promise to pull back, we will be hosed at the cost of using administrators for conducting teacher evaluations.

Mr. Peabody stated States and local entities are determining how education will be run and what will be taught in each local entity. The common core standard is a movement to attempt to circumvent the long standing tradition of American education. As a parent, he has seen good teachers in our schools. We also have some good administrators in our town. He appreciates Dr. Schumann. It bothers him that the State is going to tell us how to evaluate our teachers. He trusted Mr. Neville when his kids were at JFK and Mr. Newton when they were at Fermi to do the right thing and you both did.

Mr. Peabody thanked Dr. Schumann and his staff for answering all of his requests for information. We do not want to harm what we currently have in our education system financially. We are not looking at cutting staff or the teaching talent. We all know that there are ways that we can look at things differently and possibly come up with some creativity by looking outside of the box. He would like the Superintendent and Board to look into sharing our IT services with the Town by looking at the ITPC agreement, the service level agreement and the costs for services.

Mr. Peabody stated we cut the additional social service and guidance counselor positions in the Superintendent's proposed budget request. Can we share this service with the Town? By sharing the costs, we can focus on our general education budget needs. These are observations that were made by parents. They are also looking at these services being provided

year round and not just during the school year. The point of this is not to cut staff but to share staff resources between the Town and school.

Mr. Peabody stated we discussed that we would continue to sharpen our pencils regarding the budget. We need to find creative ways to lower the burden on tax payers. He feels that \$1.9 million dollars is not acceptable to the tax payers in Enfield. He would rather we be more aggressive and proactive instead of waiting for the Town to give us a percentage lower than what we requested.

Mr. Wawer attended the FHS CAPT Scholar Breakfast and it was excellent. He sat with both Mr. Grady and Mr. Neville. Mr. Newton did a great job. He was impressed by the number of students that scored perfectly at the highest level. Dr. Schumann mentioned this was the highest number of students scoring at this level ever. Mr. Wawer congratulated the teachers and administrators for this achievement made by the students.

Mr. Wawer attended the Buzz fundraiser spaghetti dinner. There were several hundred people that attended this event. He met parents, advisors, mentor coordinators and students. He had a good time attending this event and it was run very well.

Mr. Wawer stated that on March 14<sup>th</sup> at both Enfield High and Fermi High, students can register to vote. Denise Merrill, the Secretary of the State will be at both high schools. He invites all Board members to attend this event being held at both high schools during the lunch waves. The students will register to vote on-line.

Mr. Grady stated that he also enjoyed the FHS CAPT Scholar Breakfast. He also attended the First Readers Ceremony where 205 students were acknowledged for reading their first book. It is great to see the students. They were so excited to receive their awards. The event was very well attended. He urges Board members to attend this event in the future.

Mrs. LeBlanc reported that Buzz made it to the semi finals. She was able to see Buzz in action through her friends via FaceBook. The student support academy will be ending soon. This is a beneficial program for students. This year it was offered to high school students. Students receive support in reading and math. The students benefit from the additional support received.

Mrs. LeBlanc attended the Fermi Girls Basketball sendoff. They do such a nice job recognizing their outgoing seniors.

Mrs. LeBlanc reported the mentoring program will start again. High School students can mentor students in the elementary grades. Her daughter will mentor a student at Enfield Street. This is a great program for both the high school students and the elementary students.

Mrs. LeBlanc is glad to hear about the voter registration program that will be held this Friday at both high schools. She registered to vote when she was in high school. She encourages all students that are eligible to register to vote on Friday.

Mrs. LeBlanc congratulated the EHS Girls Basketball team. They participated in their first State Championship game in 10 years and lost to Cromwell in the first round of tournament play. The girls played really hard and she is very proud of them. They were sad that their season ended. We are now moving onto spring sports!

Mr. Neville thanked the Kite group for the video. He urged everyone to attend a meeting the first Wednesday of the month at the Hazardville Fire station. You will also receive dinner. They offer resources at the meetings. If you have a need, please contact them and they will steer you in the correct direction.

Mr. Neville stated the Fermi CAPT Breakfast deserves to be mentioned again regarding the number of students that scored 4 and 5's – 15 students scored perfectly and 71 students scored 4 and 5's. This is truly amazing. He would like us to high-light the good things go on in our schools.

Mr. Neville commended Joe Ravalese as being recognized as a Friend of Education. He does so much for our students. He does this without any recognition because it is the right thing to do. He is wonderful and is extremely generous. We have many people like this in our town.

Mr. Neville agrees with Mr. Peabody to continue to look for efficiencies. He would like to hold a workshop again were we can discuss what we can and can't do. This helps with the thought process. We told the Town Council that we would continue to look for efficiencies. He would like us to continue this discussion. Regarding the social services, he is not sure that this can be done. But it is important to educate the public on these topics.

Mrs. Thurston stated she attended the First Readers Ceremony. It was great to see how excited the students were when they received their awards. She thanked Mrs. Weseliza for everything Kite does for our families and students.

Chairman Sirard stated EFEE will hold tryouts for the Enfield Idol contest on March 12<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM in the JFK Auditorium.

Chairman Sirard stated that when we presented the budget to the Town Council, we stipulated that we will continue to look for efficiencies. He believes that both sides have been looking at the budget and have been sharpening their pencils looking for cost savings. This includes looking at joint services with the Town. He does not want anyone to get the wrong idea. We have been looking at items diligently.

Chairman Sirard added that using social services jointly might be a concern. We are using certified staff and the town doesn't. He does not believe the Town could assume the responsibility due to certifications being needed by school employees.

## **10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **a. CONTINUE THE DISCUSSION REGARDING THE USE OF THE ENRICO FERMI BUILDING**

Chairman Sirard stated the Future Use of Enrico Fermi Advisory Committee will meet at March 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM. This meeting is open to the public. He has jury duty on Monday. Hopefully this does not prohibit him from attending this meeting.

Mr. Neville stated we received information from the Superintendent regarding post secondary information. He hasn't had time to compile this information but this would be helpful information for the committee. This information can be broken down to the number of students going to a 2-year, 4-year college, trade school, unemployed, military and into the workforce. He will try to get this information into a spread sheet for the committee to use as a reference. The more data we have will help us. This is real data that can be used.

Mr. Peabody stated he attended the Curriculum Committee meeting and Ms. McKernan has the same values as we do about vocational training. She is partnering with some local and regional businesses. This would be something to consider as the Future Use Fermi Advisory committee moves forward.

Mrs. LeBlanc would like the Board to consider giving some direction regarding the possibility of

using Fermi as a middle school. We should check with the staff at JFK to see if this should be considered. They are the ones teaching middle school students every day. They might have a different perspective than we would. Their input is important. When the pre-referendum committee met, the decision was already made about using Enfield High by the Board.

Mr. Peabody agrees with Mrs. LeBlanc. Use the committee to research this. We should also reach out to the community for information. We need to look at all of the pieces with an objective eye towards the future including costs.

Mr. Wawer asked if the State of Connecticut inspection report can be shared with the committee. He also inquired about the timeline for any additional building inspections the State might conduct.

Dr. Schumann stated the State does not tell us when they are coming. They will just show up and conduct an inspection.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated that no matter what we do at Fermi, a referendum would be needed. This would be if we were to use the building as a community center or for anything else. We need to look at the reimbursement rate for renovations. If we would be reimbursed more for keeping this building as a school instead of anything else including a community center. This is something we should all be aware of. The handicapped accessible concern might make any renovations more stringent.

Chairman Sirard stated the committee was set up to keep the process open to the public. All of the meetings will be open to the public. He has stayed away from predetermining what the committee will do by allowing the committee look at this themselves in order to have an objective view on this process. He hopes we get input from community and staff. This is the first time we have appointed teachers to a committee specifically for this reason. He wants this to be an informational process.

Mr. Peabody stated we need data and need to clearly look at the data using score cards. He is looking forward to doing what makes sense. He would appreciate people e-mailing us directly and calling us. Let us know what you are thinking. We need to look at the facts as well as the long term costs.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated the Town has had people evaluate the Fermi building. Has the Fermi building been evaluated as a middle school? This is something that would need to be done. We would like to keep the process as fair as possible and need to address all areas.

Chairman Sirard stated the Fermi building has not been evaluated as a middle school. It has been evaluated by GM2 as an educational building. The requirements for a high school and middle school are very similar. There are some unique challenges at the middle school level. This would be a good place to start. He does not want to predetermine what the committee will do. The committee will address this when they meet. The committee will make a recommendation to the Board. The committee will gather information. The Board will make the final decision about this, not the committee.

Mr. Wawer stated he was involved in a process a few years ago where they were presented the facts and the costs for evaluating buildings with a group of citizens. The decision was based on statistical information and data. He believes this process will end up the same way in the end.

Mr. Neville stated that middle schools are setup in a certain way to meet the educational needs of the students. They need to support the needs of the students. There are reasons why a middle school is setup in a certain way. He spent 20 years doing this with the NEAS&C. Dr. Schumann has also done this. You need to look at how the schools are laid out to support

educational learning. We will need to look to see if we have the need to use this as an educational setting. We also need to tag the dollars that will go along with using this as an educational facility. He believes the building committee had some information regarding the costs. Mr. Weseliza shared this information with us. We also need to consider the Harriet Beecher Stowe building. The costs need to be linked together. We need to think of this as we move forward with the committee.

Mr. Jonaitis stated we have an opportunity to have 2 middle school buildings at either end of the town. Neither building would be used to full capacity. This is just another thought.

Mr. Neville asked who will pay for this and how much time will this take. We have a deadline with the clock regarding the OCR compliance issue at Fermi. He is worried about starting the clock ticking again.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated the JFK is much smaller than Fermi. We need to include JFK in the process in order to access the needs. We need to objectively look at the needs of the middle school. Fermi could house them easily. We need to include JFK in this process. She likes the idea of team teaching. We need to address the lack of space issues at JFK.

Mr. Peabody agrees with Mrs. LeBlanc. JFK is overcrowded. The trailers need to be addressed. We need to make an investment and look into this objectively. We need to look at both schools objectively. He believes the committee will need to present options to the Board regarding what makes sense. We may need to bring in an architect but he is not sure where the money would come from to bring the building up to ADA compliance. These issues need to be addressed. We would be doing a huge disservice to our community if we do not make the same kind of investment that has already been done.

Chairman Sirard stated we need to be careful when we are discussing this. The committee will look into this without any predispositions. The committee will be open to the public and we will not have any pre-determined requisites. The committee will decide the direction they will go in.

Mr. Jonaitis asked about the trailers being used at Stowe and asked if we use them? Dr. Schumann stated they belong to a leasing company. We have contacted the leasing company and when PSA is done with them, the company will sell them or re-lease them.

Mr. Jonaitis asked if we have looked into purchasing them. Dr. Schumann stated we have not done that.

Mr. Peabody does not believe that they are predisposing anything the committee may do. We are going out of our way to look at all variables.

## **11. NEW BUSINESS**

### **a. Sabbatical Leave Request**

Board members agreed to address Item #11a after Item 17a.

## **12. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Mrs. Unghire reported that she attended the Legislative Breakfast in Hartford and the CREC Council meeting.

Mrs. Unghire also reported that she met with Principal Newton since she is the liaison at Fermi. Fermi will hold their talent show on Friday and Saturday. She is looking forward to

attending.

Mr. Neville reported that the Curriculum Committee met. Ms. McKernan, Mr. Peabody and Mrs. Thurston attended. We reviewed a policy regarding retention and will be moving this item to the Policy Committee for their input. We discussed curriculum and linkage of technology for curriculum. We discussed the input and needs as well as how technology is part of this. Ms. McKernan will bring the committee additional information on this to our next meeting. He is pleased with the direction we are going in.

Mr. Peabody reported that Ms. McKernan addressed textbooks. We are looking at ways to eliminate purchasing textbooks. He applauds Ms. McKernan for looking into this and using the teachers in this process.

Mr. Neville added that a lot of school districts are going in this direction. The teachers would be actively involved in this process. We are looking at starting this as a pilot to try this out. This is the start of a process. It is worth looking into this and we are thinking outside of the box.

Mrs. Thurston reported that she left the meeting exhausted. There was so much positive energy. Ms. McKernan is amazing. She wished that all of our educators were like her. This committee will get a lot done.

Mr. Neville added that can't is not in Ms. McKernan's vocabulary. Dr. Schumann agreed with Mr. Neville.

### **13. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Neville moved, seconded by Mr. Grady that Special Meeting minutes of February 18, 2014 be approved. A vote by **show-of-hands 8-0-1** passed unanimously with Mr. Jonaitis abstaining.

Mr. Grady moved, seconded by Mr. Neville that Special Meeting minutes of February 22, 2014 be approved. A vote by **show-of-hands 8-0-1** passed unanimously with Mr. Sirard abstaining.

Mr. Grady moved, seconded by Mr. Neville that Regular Meeting minutes of February 25, 2014 be approved. A vote by **show-of-hands 8-0-1** passed unanimously with Mrs. Unghire abstaining.

### **14. APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS PAYROLL - None**

### **15. CORRESPONDENCE AND COMMUNICATIONS - None**

### **16. AUDIENCES**

Mary Scutt, Yale Drive – Mrs. Scutt asked about allowing parents to opt their child from testing. She is concerned that we are not allowed to do this. Parents should have the right to do this. She is concerned with the legal opinion the Superintendent received. Is this just to discourage the parents or will penalties be imposed for this? She is also questioning the FY2014-15 School Calendar vacation week in April. This week does not correspond with other towns. Are we in-line with what other towns are doing? We have children in other school systems.

### **17. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mr. Grady moved, seconded by Mr. Wawer that the Enfield Board of Education enter into

Executive Session for Matter(s) Related to Personnel.

A vote by **show-of-hands 8-1-0** passed with Mrs. Thurston in dissent.

The Board relocated to the Staff Lounge for the Executive Session. Dr. Schumann joined the Board. No Board action occurred while in Executive Session.

**11. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Sabbatical Leave Request**

Mr. Grady moved, seconded by Mrs. Thurston that the Enfield Board of Education approves the Sabbatical Leave Request as presented.

A vote by **roll-call 0-9-0**. The Board denied the request for sabbatical leave unanimously.

**18. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Grady moved, seconded by Mrs. Thurston to adjourn the Regular Meeting of March 11, 2014.

All ayes, motion passed unanimously.

Meeting stood adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Vincent M. Grady  
Secretary  
Board of Education

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Zalucki, Recording Secretary