

MINUTES OF THE

April 6, 2009

Regular Meeting of the Berne-Knox-Westerlo CSD Board of Education

The regular Meeting of the Board of Education of the Berne-Knox-Westerlo Central School District was held on April 6, 2009, in the High School Auditorium.

Members Present: Helen Lounsbury Maureen Sikule
Michelle Fusco Sean O'Connor
Jack Harlow

Others Present: Kimberly LaBelle Brian Corey
Timothy Holmes Fred Marcil
Tom Galvin Kelly Smith
Bill Tindale Mr. & Mrs. Kalina
Edward Ackroyd Vas Lefkaditis
Mike Reynolds Karen White
Carolyn Anderson Joseph Golden
Carol Willsey Amy Anderson
Jill Norray Mrs. Farnam
Mrs. O'Connor Students/Athletes
Residents Mark Raven, Reporter
Chrissie Margiotta Zach Simeone, Altamont Enterprise
Linda Berquist Eileen Rogers
Karen Barber Staff Members

The meeting was called to order by the President, Mrs. Lounsbury at 6:00 p.m.

Executive Session

At 6:01 p.m., motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to enter into Executive Session to discuss Contract Negotiations, CSE/CPSE Recommendations, and Employment Status of Particular Employees. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Mrs. LaBelle and Mr. Holmes were present during executive session.

Return to Public Session

At 6:58 p.m., motion was made by Mrs. Sikule, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to return to public session. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

The meeting was called to order by the President, Mrs. Lounsbury at 7:02 p.m. Mrs. Lounsbury welcomed all present.

Pledge of Allegiance

Superintendent Schrade led all in the pledge of allegiance.

Recognition of Winter Athletes and Coaches

Mr. Schrade started the recognition ceremony for the Winter Athletes and Coaches. He spoke of the Girls' Varsity Basketball Team who was Western Athletic Conference, Southern Division Champions. Coach Galvin thanked the School Board, Parents, Athletes and Administration for their support. Athletic Director, Fred Marcil gave praise to Mr. Galvin for being a good coach, and also League Chairman for girls basketball. Each Team Member was recognized and presented with a certificate of achievement from the Board of Education. Mr. Schrade then introduced Mr. Jeff Vogel who was honored as the Section II Class D Wrestling Coach of the Year. Mr. Vogel gave a brief history of the Wrestling Team, noting their success and how far they have come, in both athletics and scholarship. He announced each Team Member's name, presenting each with a certificate of achievement. Special mention was made of Josh Glick, who was name Student Athlete of the Week by TV Channel 13.

There was a brief refreshment break at 7:15 p.m.

The meeting was called back to order by the President, Mrs. Lounsbury at 7:35 p.m.

Mrs. Lounsbury complimented the PTA, Faculty Members, and Students for the fabulous Science Fair.

Mrs. Lounsbury also commended Debbie Rosko, School Lunch Manager, for achieving the designation of School Nutrition Specialist from the New York School Nutrition Association.

Also recognized was the cast and all involved in the production of "Grease", faculty members, and parents for a great job done.

The public was reminded that anyone interested in running for a Seat on the BKW Board of Education must submit their petition by 5:00 p.m. on April 20th to the District Clerk.

Mrs. Lounsbury noted communication from Albany County Executive Breslin's Office regarding a training program for schools.

Consent Agenda

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to approve the items on the Consent Agenda. Motion was approved. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mr. O'Connor that the Board of Education has no objections to the recommendations of the Committee on Special Education and the Committee on Pre-School Special Education, and approves the authorization of funds to implement the Special Education programs and services consistent with such recommendations, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to approve the Treasurer's Report, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mr. O'Connor that be it resolved, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, Steven M. Schrade, that the Board of Education hereby appoints Roger Brightly as a Long Term Substitute Technology Teacher, effective April 7, 2009 through June 19, 2009, on Step 1 of the Teachers' Contract, salary pro-rated. Motion was carried. 5 yes. (To replace Richard Hallenbeck who will be on a leave of absence)

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to appoint Lisa Achenbach as Mentor for Meghan Vooris, effective 04/07/09 through 06/30/09, as per the attached recommendation. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to appoint Judy Tambasco as Mentor for Diane Carl, effective 04/07/09 through 06/30/09, as per the attached recommendation. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to approve the request from Richard Hallenbeck, Technology Teacher, for a paid Family Medical Leave, effective 03/30/09 through 06/19/09. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to approve the request from Shannon James, Science Teacher, to extend her maternity leave of absence from 09/01/09 through 06/30/09. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to approve the request from Danielle Schneible, Special Education Teacher, for a maternity leave of absence from approximately 09/09/09 through 11/18/09. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education held on March 16, 2009, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to approve the 2009-10 Private School Transportation Requests, as per the attached list. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to approve the Non-Public Textbook Disposition Request, per the attached list. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to approve the Future Agenda Items, as enclosed. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to approve the Dates to Remember, as enclosed. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Public Discussion

Mrs. Kalina expressed disappointment over the lack of a response to her recent e-mails to District Officials regarding bus purchases versus bus leasing, special education and transportation issues. Mrs. Kalina will re-send her e-mails to Mr. Holmes and the Board.

On behalf of the Elementary Faculty, Mrs. Carol Willsey (Fourth Grade Teacher), expressed concern over the elimination of the Elementary Librarian Position for the 2009-10 School Year. She volunteered to donate \$2,000 of her 2009-10 salary to help with the Budget.

Several parents praised the positive experience of the Grades 6-8 middle school concept, making special note of the success of the Grade 5 to Grade 6 Transition Program. Concern was expressed over the proposed moving of the Sixth Grade back to the Elementary Building. Parents wanted assurance that the same level of education, exposure to other opportunities, such as participation in musical productions, enrichment, AIS services and other special needs would be maintained. Another parent did express support for the idea of the 6th Grade being housed in the Elementary Building. Mrs. Karen White shared a recent survey in which the majority of students believed the Sixth Grade should remain in the middle/high school building. Parents also felt students should be given enough time to adjust for such a change.

A parent expressed concern that her special education student may not receive the same services as supplied at the current BOCES placement, specifically noting safety issues as well. One parent suggested locking the doors to prevent student flight. Mr. Schrade stated this was against the law, and assured the parents that the same staffing and the same safety measures which exist for the BOCES programs would be enacted at BKW. He encouraged parents with specific individual concerns to contact either Mrs. LaBelle or himself.

Program Focus - School Report Card

Mrs. LaBelle gave a presentation on the preliminary 2007-2008 School Report Card, which has been released to school districts, only. She gave a summary of the information received. In regard to overall accountability, BKW is a District in good standing. Areas needing attention are Secondary ELA; and ELA for Students with Disabilities. Targeted strategies need to be developed to maintain high academic standards as students enter ninth grade. A comprehensive plan to raise academic expectations needs to be developed; a complete understanding of graduation requirements within the BKW Community also needs to be formulated.

Committee Reports

Mr. Holmes thanked the Members of the Budget Advisory Committee for their support and respect during the process. There was good dialogue during the meetings, which started in January. He reiterated information regarding the process of formulating the Budget; discussed expenditure areas which were cut; areas of increases, potential escalation of costs in the scope of the Teachers and Employees Retirement Systems and employee benefits. The revenue picture was also reviewed, noting restoration of state aid due to the federal stimulus package. He briefly spoke of a contingent budget. Mr. Schrade said this proposed budget has a minimal effect on the instructional program. In the Elementary Library, program will be maintained through the services of a teaching assistant, with support from Mrs. Davis, who will supervise and maintain both facilities. He spoke of the reduction in the number of athletic events; elimination of summer school, the Arts in Education and ALPHA Programs. Downsizing of staff will result in slightly larger classes. Mrs. Lounsbury noted that even though the proposed budget has achieved a 0% tax levy increase, the District has no control over the STAR Program, which could potentially result in an increase to the school tax bills. Mr. O'Connor added that the 2010-11 school year will present many challenges. Mrs. Fusco spoke of her participation on the Budget Advisory Committee this year, which she felt did a great job, while being faced with the difficult task during tough financial times. Budget Advisory Committee Member Joseph Golden stated that it was an open process; he felt the State needs to spend more money on education, and encouraged all to write letters to elected officials; and also believes that next year will be horrible. Another Committee Member, Mrs. Carolyn Anderson thanked the Board for inclusion on the Committee. She felt she received a tremendous education, especially in regard to state mandates and resources. She is pleased with the direction the District is going. Ed Ackroyd encouraged firm negotiations with the unions.

The report from the Administrative Restructuring Committee was tabled.

The Committee completed the Superintendent's Evaluation Instrument. There was much discussion of the instrument. The Board will discuss it at a future Board Meeting, or perhaps at a Special Meeting.

Member Comments

Mr. O'Connor stated he was proud to be in the audience at the production of "Grease", and all involved did a spectacular job.

Mrs. Lounsbury would like to see discussion on a cell phone policy, added to "Future Agenda Items". She also inquired about the number of students who were registered for next year's Kindergarten class. Mr. Corey noted there are presently 52 enrolled.

New Business

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mr. Harlow to approve the proposed 2009-2010 Budget in the amount of \$19,791,067, which constitutes a 2.76% budget decrease and a 0% tax levy increase, to be voted upon May 19, 2009, from 9:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to approve the 2008-2009 End of the Year Schedule, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Mr. Schrade clarified the items on the schedule.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to approve the 2009-2010 School Calendar, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Mrs. Sikule asked for clarification on early dismissal days and staff development days.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to preliminarily approve Board Policy #5580 - Audit Committee, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes. (First Motion)

Motion was made by Mr. O'Connor, seconded by Mrs. Sikule to preliminarily approve Board Policy #6110 - Code of Ethics for All District Personnel, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes. (First Motion)

Motion was made by Mrs. Sikule, seconded by Mrs. Fusco to preliminarily approve Board Policy #7130 - Entitlement to Attend - Age and Residency, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes. (First Motion)

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to preliminarily approve Board Policy #7132 - Education of Homeless Children and Youths, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes. (First Motion)

Motion was made by Mr. O'Connor, seconded by Mr. Harlow to preliminarily approve Board Policy #7610 - Special Education: District Plan, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes. (First Motion)

Mrs. LaBelle reviewed the Sixth Grade Information for the 2009-2010 School Year. She gave brief background information, which included a summary of the Sixth Grade Committee recommendations. She gave statistical information of the current Fifth Grade and Sixth Grade. Also presented was a proposal for the Sixth Grade placement located at the Elementary School. Mr. Marcil asked that the Sixth Graders only be housed in the Elementary Building for the duration of the building project. Mr. Tindale, Sixth Grade Teacher, spoke on behalf of the Sixth Grade Team. They feel the current location to be in the best interest of the students. He detailed the Sixth Grade Transition Program and current initiatives. Several Middle School Teachers expressed their strong support of maintaining the Sixth Grade in the Middle/High School Building. Mr. Schrade explained that due to the Building Project, two spaces will be lost due to the construction project. The boys locker room cannot be used due to the construction blocking the outside exit, and a small classroom at the west end of the school will be converted into an emergency exit. In addition, with the plan to bring two special education classes back to the District, these classes will be housed in the middle/high school, utilizing additional space. Keeping the Sixth Graders at the Elementary School will also help to alleviate the overcrowding of the middle/high school cafeteria. He assured the staff and public the program for the Sixth Graders will remain the same, with some services/activities being administered at the middle/high school building. The safety of the students traveling between the buildings was discussed.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mrs. Fusco to move temporarily, for one year, the Sixth Grade to the Elementary School Building, with special attention being paid to trying to eliminate transition between the Middle/High School, for considerations of safety. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Mrs. Lounsbury felt the motion should be amended to specify that the Sixth Grade be moved for next year, and then be re-evaluated. Mr. O'Connor felt the placement could be re-visited without amending the motion.

Unfinished Business

Discussion of Board Goals was tabled until the next regular Board Meeting.

Motion was made by Mrs. Sikule, seconded by Mr. Harlow to approve Board Policy #5660 - Records Management, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes. (Second Motion)

Motion was made by Mr. O'Connor, seconded by Mr. Harlow to approve Board Policy #5683 - Fire Drills, Bomb Threats and Bus Emergency Drills, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes. (Second Motion)

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to approve Board Policy #6213.1 - Disciplining of a Tenured Teacher or Certified Personnel, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes. (Second Motion)

Motion was made by Mr. O'Connor, seconded by Mr. Harlow to approve Board Policy #6217 - Professional Certification: 175 hours of Professional Development Requirement, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes. (Second Motion)

In respect to the search for a Principal, Mr. Schrade reported we have garnered 40+ responses to our advertisement. The closing date is April 24th. Resumes will be reviewed, with a committee holding interviews during the first two weeks in May. Finalists will be sent to the Board, with a potential appointment at the beginning of June, and start date of employment to be July 1st. Brief discussion on the composition of an interview committee ensued. Qualities Mr. Schrade would like to see in candidates are someone with experience at the secondary level, one who has an appreciation for all aspects of academics, the arts and athletics, with a strong academic background. Mr. Schrade will work with members of the Teachers' Association to develop a plan for the composition of the committee. He will have particulars for the next Board Meeting. Mr. Schrade also reminded the Board that procedures call for one parent from the Shared Decision Making Committee be included on the interview committee.

An update on the building project by Mr. Schrade revealed the District hopes to seek bids for construction by the end of August, construction commencing in the fall of 2009, with near completion by the fall of 2010.

Mr. Corey stated that after looking at the current staffing, facility usage and scheduling, he determined that the most feasible way to meet the PE regulations would be to continue with the regular scheduled PE classes and add a physical education component where PE is taught by certified elementary classroom teachers or teaching assistants under the direction and supervision of a certified physical education teacher or the director of physical education for approximately 10 minutes per day. This will give the students an average of 120 to 140 minutes per week, thus meeting the PE regulations. He also noted that in good weather, the walking program will continue.

Public Discussion

Concern was expressed over the future location of the student parking lot.

In regard to flight risk students, a resident suggested installing buzzers on the doors. He also suggested consolidating administrative positions, thus eliminating one position.

Another resident urged the Board to re-negotiate benefits and health care costs with the various unions. Concerns were expressed over the close proximity of the cell tower to students in the Middle/High School Building. Mrs. Lounsbury reiterated her attendance at the Town of Berne, where she was assured unequivocally there was no danger.

Executive Session

At 10:17 p.m., motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to enter into Executive Session to discuss contract negotiations. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

At 10:50 p.m., Mr. Schrade and Mrs. Martin left executive session.

Mr. Schrade and Mrs. Martin re-entered executive session at 11:07 p.m.

Return to Public Session

At 11:10 p.m., motion was made by Mrs. Sikule, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to return to public session. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Personnel

Motion was made by Mrs. Sikule, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to approve the Employment Agreement Amendment between the Berne-Knox-Westerlo Central School District Board of Education and Steven M. Schrade, Superintendent of Schools, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

It was determined that the vote on the Annual BOCES Budget and Board Members will be held on April 20, 2009 at 3:30 p.m. in the District Office.

Adjourn

Motion was made by Mrs. Sikule, seconded by Mr. O'Connor that the meeting adjourn. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

The meeting adjourned at 11:14 p.m.

Denise J. Martin
District Clerk