

MINUTES OF THE

April 27, 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 27, 2009, in the High School Auditorium.

Members Present: Helen Lounsbury Michelle Fusco (Arrived at 6:06 p.m.)
 Maureen Sikule Sean O'Connor
 Jack Harlow

Others Present: Kimberly LaBelle Brian Corey
 Timothy Holmes Fred Marcil
 Robert Drake Carolyn Anderson
 Edward Ackroyd Class of 2009 Scholars
 Donna McGovern Sally Baker
 Residents/Parents Molly Tiffany
 Joan Adriance Mark Raven, Reporter
 CSEA Staff Members Zach Simeone, Altamont Enterprise

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. 4 yes.

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

Mrs. Fusco arrived at 6:06 p.m.

Return to Public Session

At 7:10 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 7:15 p.m. Mrs. Lounsbury welcomed all present.

Pledge of Allegiance

Superintendent Schrade led all in the pledge of allegiance.

Recognition of Top Scholars Class of 2009

Mr. Schrade opened the recognition ceremony for the Top Scholars of the Class of 2009 by introducing Mr. Drake, Acting High School Principal and Mr. Marcil, Associate Principal. Names of the Top Scholars for the Class of 2009 were read alphabetically. They were as follows: Christina Bartonicek; Max Clayton; Sarah Fuller; Samantha Fusco; Martha Mackey; Amber Pitcher; Katlyn Prescott; Emma Scott; David Sikule; Patrick Stanton; Andrea Van Dyke; Rebecca Villeneuve; Alyssa Wetterau; Denise Willsey; Laren Wilson; Lacey Yakel; and Samantha Zabel. A brief synopsis of each student was given, along with their future goals and educational plans. Certificates of achievement were distributed to each Scholar present. The announcement of the Valedictorian and Salutatorian for the Class of 2009 was given. The honor of Salutatorian was shared between David Sikule and Denise Willsey. The honor of Valedictorian was awarded to Alyssa Wetterau.

There was a brief refreshment break at 7:30 p.m.

The meeting was called back to order by the President, Mrs. Lounsbury at 7:45 p.m.

Mrs. Lounsbury noted two additions to the Consent Agenda: a request from the Town of Berne for Building Use for the Summer Recreation Program, and a request from the Hilltowns Players for storage space. It was also noted that Item 6k - Accept Petitions of Board Candidates was removed from the consent agenda to be voted upon separately.

Consent Agenda

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mr. Harlow to approve the items on the Consent Agenda. Motion was approved. 5 yes.

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

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mr. Harlow to approve the Budget Transfers, 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 Angel Rodrigue to the Teaching Assistant tenure area, for a two year probationary term, effective April 21, 2009, salary per the Teacher Support Contract, salary pro-rated. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mr. Harlow to approve the Emergency Conditional Appointments, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mr. Harlow to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education held on April 6, 2009, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mr. Harlow to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board of Education held on April 20, 2009, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mr. Harlow to approve the late requests for Private School Transportation for the 2009-10 school year, as per the attached list. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mr. Harlow to appoint Alan Zuk as Chairman of the Meeting for the Budget Hearing (May 11, 2009) and the Annual Budget Vote (May 19, 2009), as per the attached list. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mr. Harlow to appoint Ida Motschmann as Chairperson of the Election Inspectors and Recorders for the Annual Budget Vote (May 19, 2009), as per the attached list. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mr. Harlow to appoint the list of Inspectors and Recorders for the Annual Budget Vote (May 19, 2009), as per the attached list. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mr. Harlow to approve the request from the Hilltowns Seniors to use a school bus on May 7, 2009 for a trip to Albany, at no cost to the District. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mr. Harlow to approve the request from the Town of Berne to use the Elementary School Building and School Buses for the Berne Summer Recreation Program during the weeks of July 6-10 and July 13-17, 2009, at no cost to the District. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mr. Harlow to approve the request from the Town of Knox to use School Buses for transportation to Minekill State Park in Blenheim, New York for their Fall Soccer Program during the weeks of July 13-17; July 20-24; and August 3-7, 2009, at no cost to the District. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mr. Harlow to approve the medical leave of absence request from Katyanna Carll Keyser, High School English Teacher, from April 27, 2009 through June 30, 2009, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

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

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mr. Harlow to approve the Dates to Remember, as enclosed. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Sikule, seconded by Mrs. Fusco to accept the Petition for Nomination for Candidate for a Member of the Berne-Knox-Westerlo Board of Education for a Three Year Term from John Harlow, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Sikule, seconded by Mrs. Fusco to accept the Petition for Nomination for Candidate for a Member of the Berne-Knox-Westerlo Board of Education for a Three Year Term from Carolyn Anderson, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Both Mr. Harlow and Mrs. Anderson were introduced to the audience.

Public Discussion

Mrs. Stempel urged the Board to reconsider the elimination of the Elementary Librarian, expressed her feeling that the love of reading starts at a young age. Mr. Schrade assured the public that the program at the Elementary Library will continue as is, with Mrs. Davis overseeing the operation of the Library, and also that a teaching assistant will be assigned to the Elementary Library for the full day.

A resident had a question about the personnel appointments and leave of absence.

Mr. Ackroyd mentioned that administrators and teachers in a surrounding district had agreed to give a certain number of day's pay back to their district, and asked if BKW would consider doing the same. Mr. Schrade stated this would be a negotiation item, and if the Board deemed appropriate, it could be included in the negotiation process.

Mrs. Adriance suggested that information be distributed to parents and students regarding the proposed Board Policy on Cell Phone Use, if this is a new rule, especially since the cell tower in Berne will be operational on May 1st. Mrs. Lounsbury stated that if the Board Policy Manual was available on the website, that would be a possible way to handle distribution. Mrs. Sikule suggested sending notification home with report cards and also list notification on the BKW Website.

Program Focus - Foreign Language Program

Sally Baker, Middle/High School Foreign Language Teacher was present to give an overview of the current Grades 6-12 Foreign Language Program. She reviewed grade offerings and content, guidelines, regents and proficiency exams requirements. She asked that the Board consider instituting the ten week foreign language course at the fifth grade level, and 20 weeks for sixth graders, thus allowing the seventh and eighth graders 40 weeks of a foreign language. Mrs. Sikule expressed concern that most colleges require two years of a foreign language, and that with the current configuration, most students complete their foreign language requirement as juniors, leaving a gap before taking foreign language in college. There was brief discussion on the current foreign language offerings of French and Spanish at the Middle/High School.

Elementary Principal, Brian Corey distributed the BKW Elementary Foreign Language Program, Grades K-5 Spanish and French Document. He briefly reviewed the program, giving results of a survey conducted concerning the program. It concluded that foreign language at the elementary level to be beneficial. It also deemed that scheduling issues and more cross curriculum instruction need to be explored.

Committee Reports

Mr. Schrade announced his retirement as Superintendent of Schools, effective August 15, 2009. He thanked the Board for the privilege of serving the District for the last 19 years, first as High School Principal, and for the last 9 1/2 years as Superintendent. Mrs. Lounsbury noted that she was on the Board when Mr. Schrade was appointed Superintendent, but was sad to be on the Board when Mr. Schrade chose to retire.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mrs. Sikule to accept the retirement resignation from Steven M. Schrade, Superintendent of Schools, with deepest regrets, effective August 15, 2009. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

There was a standing ovation for Mr. Schrade.

Motion was made by Mr. O'Connor, seconded by Mr. Harlow to appoint Kimberly LaBelle as Interim Superintendent, effective August 16, 2009. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Mr. Schrade reported that per the Administrative Restructuring Committee's mission to reduce the number of administrative positions in the District, Mrs. LaBelle's current position would be abolished. While moving into the position of Interim Superintendent, Mrs. LaBelle will continue the fine work she has done, especially in terms of curriculum and staff development. The Special Education piece has not yet been firmed up, and needs administrative oversight. Final plans are to be announced.

Mrs. Fusco reported on her attendance at the Schoharie County School Boards Meeting on April 23rd. The main area of discussion centered on the upcoming Spring Dinner Meeting. The speaker will be the President of SUNY Cobleskill. Board Members were invited to attend, and should make reservations with Mrs. Shunney. Schoharie Central Schools will be hosting the New School Board Member Orientation. There was also discussion concerning the savings bond awards for Valedictorian and Salutatorian.

Member Comments

Mr. O'Connor stated it was a great loss to the District to have Mr. Schrade resign, and was glad to be able to serve on the Board and work with him this past year. He is looking forward to working with Kim and her talents going forth. Mr. Harlow agreed. Mrs. Sikule enjoyed working the Mr. Schrade over the years, and noted he has made a lot of valuable contributions to the District. Mrs. Fusco concurred.

Mrs. Lounsbury read aloud an article from NYS School Boards Association which described what School Board Members do.

Various e-mails from community members were noted. One suggestion was to make the Agenda for Board Meetings more informative. Another would like to see personnel appointments listed, with names of individuals. It was suggested to list positions, not names. A further e-mail asked that a complete list of procedures be available on the website, if a person has a complaint or concern. Mr. Schrade will speak with our Website employee.

New Business

Mr. Schrade stated that the composition of the initial committee conducting the search for a new Secondary School Principal would be an Administrator; at least three High School Teachers; a Guidance Counselor; a Clerical Worker, a Teaching Assistant, a Community Member, and a High School Student. The first meeting will be held on Wednesday at which time questions will be refined. Courtesy interviews from the acting principal process will be held. After reviewing the 75+ applicants, candidates considered for an interview will be those who are currently working in the position or have had significant administrative experience. The Administrative Group will then get together with the Committee to choose six candidates who will go through to the next round. At least three final candidates will be presented to the Board of Education. The plan is to wrap up the process in late May or early June, with a start date of July 1st. The CSEA Unit will send one representative to join the Committee.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to preliminarily approve Board Policy #7611 - Children With Disabilities, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes. (First Motion)

Mr. Harlow asked how does a District define a disabled child. Mrs. LaBelle clarified.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to preliminarily approve Board Policy #7315 - Student Use of Cell Phones and Text Messaging, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes. (First Motion)

Mr. O'Connor asked if penalties for cell phone use were listed in the Student Code of Conduct. Mr. Schrade stated the penalties are not enumerated yet, but would be the same process; i.e. first warning, second warning, etc. Mr. O'Connor wants to see a zero tolerance policy, letter of the law, and would like to see that reflected before the second vote. Mr. Harlow will ascertain the cell phone policy used at Germantown Schools for comparison, since they have already had experience with cell phones and

have fine-tuned their policy. Mrs. Sikule noted the time frame listed in the policy should be changed from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Mrs. Fusco felt the policy to be too vague, must be strict. Mrs. Sikule commented that students shouldn't have them on in the classroom. Mrs. Lounsbury felt cheating to be a big issue, due to the texting feature. It was felt the Board should garner as much information from other school districts that have already instituted cell phone policies, and adjust and fine tune our policy from these examples. Mrs. Adriance urged the Board to not rush into a decision without reaching out to parents, students and the community. All should be given adequate information and notice on the policy, and what punishments will be enforced well in advance of passage of the policy. Mr. Schrade stated that teachers and administrators act on what is a nuisance or disruption, and deal with it in the same manner as other infractions listed in the Student Code of Conduct, which also enumerates "use of electronic devices". He also went on to say that when the policy is approved, it will be posted on the School News Notifier. This is only the first vote, with more information to be garnered from other districts. Information will be sent to the community and also put on the website in a timely fashion.

Motion was made by Mrs. Sikule, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to preliminarily approve Board Policy #7350 - Corporal Punishment/Emergency Interventions, 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 #7618 - Declassification of Students with Disabilities, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes. (First Motion)

Mrs. Sikule asked why specific wording had been taken out of the policy. Mrs. LaBelle stated that regulations have changes

Motion was made by Mr. O'Connor, seconded by Mrs. Fusco to preliminarily approve Board Policy #7420 - Sports and the Athletic Program, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes. (First Motion)

Mrs. Sikule would like to see the old wording regarding supervision of students added back into the policy, and also asked that wording to the effect "that practice not begin until a coach is present" also be included. This would also prevent so called "captain's practice".

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mrs. Sikule to preliminarily approve Board Policy #7513 - Administration of Medication, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Mr. O'Connor stated there needs to be modification the first sentence under "Emergency Medication". Mr. Schrade will address this.

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to approve the request from the Class of 2009 for a trip to Six Flags Amusement Park in Massachusetts on May 29, 2009, at no cost to the District, with the usual disclaimer on the permission form. Motion was carried. 5 yes

A vote on the Transportation Handbook was tabled.

The vote on tenure appointments will be made after executive session.

Unfinished Business

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

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mr. Harlow to approve Board Policy #6110 - Code of Ethics for All District Personnel, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes. (Second Motion)

Motion was made by Mrs. Sikule, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to approve Board Policy #7130 - Entitlement to Attend - Age and Residency, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes. (Second Motion)

Motion was made by Mrs. Sikule, seconded by Mrs. Fusco to approve Board Policy #7132 - Education of Homeless Children and Youths, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes. (Second Motion)

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mr. Harlow to approve Board Policy #7610 - Special Education: District Plan, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes. (Second Motion)

Mr. Schrade, Mr. Holmes and Mrs. LaBelle met with members of the Helderberg Christian School this afternoon. The people from HCS were unable to ascertain skilled volunteers to perform repairs,

and cannot afford the estimated cost of \$12,000. to perform these services, as previously outlined by Mr. Holmes. Mr. O'Connor was disturbed with the letter presented to Board from the Helderberg

Christian School Board. The Board explored options for next year. Mr. Harlow cautioned that the Westerlo Building is a community owned asset, and should not go into disrepair. He went on to say it is the Board's responsibility to fix or dispose of that asset. Mr. Holmes stated that at least \$5,000 in repairs would need to be done for next year. Mr. O'Connor noted that the District has several buyers waiting in the wings. Mrs. Sikule suggested that the Administrators look at what is critical to be done next year, propose a monthly lease increase, and have Mr. Schrade and Mr. Holmes meet with officials from the Helderberg Christian School to see if they have a reasonable counter proposal. These issues could be discussed at a special meeting before the Budget Hearing on May 11, at 6:00 p.m. All were in agreement to hold a special meeting.

The Board Goals were reviewed.

Mr. Holmes reported that there were inaccuracies in the Internal Audit Report. He will make a written response to the report and present it to the Audit & Finance Committee for their input. He will set up a meeting with the Committee.

Mr. Holmes noted the meeting with the Town of Berne regarding shared services was postponed and will be rescheduled.

Mrs. LaBelle reported the data on the School Report card was released on Wednesday. She will compile the results for the next Board meeting, and will e-mail the information to the Board Members. This will be a future agenda item for discussion. In the meantime, there will be a link posted on the website to NYS Education Department for the community to view the information.

Mr. Holmes gave an brief explanation of the STAR Exemption process, and its potential effect on school tax bills. The District will not know the full impact of the STAR Exemptions until the equalization rates are set in August. He also noted the Middle Class STAR Rebate program has been eliminated.

Mr. Schrade reported that any Federal Stimulus monies cannot be used to lower tax levies. It also cannot be used to offset reductions to STAR dollars. The Federal Government would take the monies away. Potentially, BKW will receive \$30K in Title I money. Suggested use of money could be to restore a portion of the summer school program. Mr. Schrade stated other uses of the money would be to maintain or create jobs, so you don't eliminate jobs; it must be used for instructional purposes. Mrs. Lounsbury suggested a person in the Elementary Computer Room. Mr. Harlow asked that the Administration present a recommendation for the best use of the extra money at the next regular Board Meeting.

In response to a suggestion made by a resident that the District consider contracting for bus services, Mr. Holmes discovered that if transportation has always been provided in-house, this could only be done if the Union agrees to it. Mr. Schofield will provide a legal opinion on that subject. Mr. Holmes will have a report on leasing of buses for the next Board Meeting. Mr. Schrade noted preliminary numbers don't favor leasing.

It was announced that DOT inspections have resulted in a 98.2% passage of our buses.

Public Discussion

A resident had questions regarding the appointment of Mrs. LaBelle.

Executive Session

At 9:55 p.m., motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to enter into Executive Session to discuss the 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 10:04 p.m., motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mrs. Sikule to return to public session. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

The meeting was called back to order by the President, Mrs. Lounsbury at 10:07 p.m.

Personnel

Motion was made by Mrs. Sikule, seconded by Mr. O'Connor that be it resolved that in compliance with the provisions of Section 3012 of the Education Law and Part 30.3 of the Rules of the Board of Regents and upon the recommendation of Steven M. Schrade, Superintendent of Schools, that Melissa Lawrence, a probationary teacher, be appointed on tenure to the position of Reading/Elementary Teacher, effective 09/01/09. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mr. O'Connor that be it resolved that in compliance with the provisions of Section 3012 of the Education Law and Part 30.3 of the Rules of the Board of Regents and upon the recommendation of Steven M. Schrade, Superintendent of Schools, that Edward Greene, a probationary teacher, be appointed on tenure to the position of Elementary Teacher, effective 09/01/09. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mrs. Sikule that be it resolved that in compliance with the provisions of Section 3012 of the Education Law and Part 30.3 of the Rules of the Board of Regents and upon the recommendation of Steven M. Schrade, Superintendent of Schools, that Laura LaFontaine, a probationary teacher, be appointed on tenure to the position of Elementary Teacher, effective 09/01/09. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. O'Connor, seconded by Mrs. Fusco that be it resolved that in compliance with the provisions of Section 3012 of the Education Law and Part 30.3 of the Rules of the Board of Regents and upon the recommendation of Steven M. Schrade, Superintendent of Schools, that Shelby Miller, a probationary teacher, be appointed on tenure to the position of Elementary Teacher, effective 09/01/09. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. O'Connor, seconded by Mrs. Sikule that be it resolved that in compliance with the provisions of Section 3012 of the Education Law and Part 30.3 of the Rules of the Board of Regents and upon the recommendation of Steven M. Schrade, Superintendent of Schools, that Agnes Zellin, a probationary teacher, be appointed on tenure to the position of Elementary Teacher, effective 09/01/09. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mrs. Sikule that be it resolved that in compliance with the provisions of Section 3012 of the Education Law and Part 30.3 of the Rules of the Board of Regents and upon the recommendation of Steven M. Schrade, Superintendent of Schools, that Timothy Service, a probationary teacher, be appointed on tenure to the position of Social Studies Teacher, effective 09/01/09. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Sikule, seconded by Mr. O'Connor that be it resolved that in compliance with the provisions of Section 3012 of the Education Law and Part 30.3 of the Rules of the Board of Regents and upon the recommendation of Steven M. Schrade, Superintendent of Schools, that the probationary period of Richard Hochheimer, a probationary teacher in the Music Tenure Area, be extended for one year, effective 09/01/09. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Sikule, seconded by Mr. O'Connor that be it resolved that in compliance with the provisions of Section 3012 of the Education Law and Part 30.3 of the Rules of the Board of Regents and upon the recommendation of Steven M. Schrade, Superintendent of Schools, that the probationary period of Erin Styne, a probationary teacher in the Special Education Tenure Area, be extended for one year, effective 09/01/09. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

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 10:15 p.m.

Denise J. Martin
District Clerk