

Please Note: These minutes are pending Board approval.

**Board of Education
Newtown, Connecticut**

Minutes of the Board of Education meeting on Thursday, February 3, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. in the board room at 3 Primrose Street.

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| W. Hart, Chair | J. Robinson |
| D. Leidlein, Vice Chair | L. Gejda |
| A. Buzzi, Secretary | R. Bienkowski |
| D. Nanavaty | 8 Staff |
| L. Bittman | 8 Public |
| R. Gaines | 2 Press |
| K. Alexander | |

Mr. Hart called the meeting to order at 7:36 p.m.

Item 6 – Transportation

Mr. Bienkowski stated that the overall increase for transportation was 6.16% with local student transportation as the biggest line item.

Mr. Nanavaty questioned the \$17,568 for bus driver salaries.

Mr. Bienkowski said we used the same amount as last year. At the last meeting we transferred money out for the transportation assistants. We can take that down to \$10,000.

Mr. Nanavaty said there are three categories for what we are paying the assistants. He prefers staying at \$2,000 than jumping up to \$3,000.

Mrs. Leidlein asked if they worked overtime in prior years.

Dr. Robinson said they did but not to this extent because they didn't have the same responsibilities.

Mr. Hart wants to look at the jump in special education transportation.

Mr. Bienkowski said MTM has more vehicles than they need for us so they have extra to transport special ed. students.

Mr. Hart asked if they could combine runs to reduce the cost.

Dr. Robinson said they are pretty effective in trying to do that but there are students going to locations at different times.

Mr. Gaines asked if it was appropriate to list expenses as we incur them instead of lumping them into a net number. That would give a true cost and potential offset.

Mr. Bienkowski mentioned that there is money for parking for Fran McKutcheon's contract because we are supposed to provide it per her contract. The new owners of Pecks Lane are requesting \$25 per bus per month to continue parking her six buses there. We are paying but are exploring the possibility of parking up here.

Mr. Hart asked for a breakdown of special ed. buses.

Mr. Nanavaty referred to a number of items from the last meeting that were to be moved.

Mr. Hart asked for them at the February 8 meeting.

Item 1 – Special Education

Dr. Regan stated that this was the first year we made adequate yearly progress on the CMTs for our special ed. students. We are focused on transition services which is what happens when the students turn 16 to the time they leave our district. A big area of importance is out-of-district placements. We also brought our students in project succeed into our local budget. It doesn't cost any more or less to educate these students. We will apply for excess cost grant money for these students.

Mr. Buzzi referred to the \$26,000 for services for Project Succeed students. Those funds get put into reimbursement costs. They are services we have to provide and we are also educating a student from another district.

Dr. Regan said we use some of the ARRA grant for personnel. We used some of the IDEA grant for those costs also. We have to absorb about \$83,000 between the two grants.

Mr. Nanavaty said that regarding project succeed he wants to be sure we don't suffer additional costs because of the move from Education Connection. We also received income from Education Connection to use the space at Reed. We have to add additional costs.

Dr. Regan said we are hiring the teacher. There is a tutor, a para professional, and an occupational and a physical therapist that are contracted. We will also add a nurse. The tuition is \$97,000 for the out-of-district student.

Mr. Nanavaty feels we aren't going to break even having this program here.

Mr. Bienkowski said it was about a \$4,700 difference. He spoke to Bob Tait about turning the tuition over to the Town. He suggested setting it up as a grant fund and paying the expenses from that. The expenses in the budget will be listed as a grant.

Item 2 – Pupil Personnel

Dr. Regan stated that pupil personnel services includes guidance services, health and medical services, social workers and the substance abuse counselor and psychological services. These people deal with both special education and regular education students. We added a nurse for Project Succeed students and a counselor at Reed.

Mrs. Leidlein asked for a breakdown of what we pay and the additional costs for project succeed.

Mr. Hart requested a breakdown of programs we ended, those transferred to other grants, and those we absorbed.

Item 3 – Curriculum

Dr. Gejda said the curriculum and instruction budget drivers are program development, staff development, contracted services, supplies and textbooks. Program development includes the Teacher Education and Mentoring program, positive behavior intervention and support, curriculum revision, literacy workshops, Rtl/SRBI tier interventions, responsive classroom and professional learning communities. Strategic plan initiatives are student achievement, personal success plans and character development. Various

areas are proposed for staff development. This budget has been decreased by \$40,126 from the 2011-2011 budget which is an overall decrease of approximately 9%.

Mrs. Bittman asked Dr. Gejda what her top priority was.

Dr. Gejda said her concern was allowing teachers the time they need for professional development. The start of the school year is busy for the teachers because of preparation and processing information on their students. During the year it is important to have ongoing PD.

Mrs. Bittman asked to keep the calendar issue up front because it is critical to have professional development.

Mr. Hart said that would be addressed after the budget. We need to have curriculum alignment.

Mrs. Bittman said we can't separate the calendar and the budget.

Mrs. Leidlein said we are required to provide time out of the classroom for PD. Why isn't some of that done on teacher time and not pulling them out of class?

Dr. Gejda said we may not provide all the professional development teachers need. After five years a teacher has to attend 90 hours of PD time to maintain certification. The teacher can take them in-district, do them over the summer, take a college class or attend workshops. We cannot meet the needs in two or three days of PD.

Dr. Robinson said that for certain things we are required to implement training in the district with teachers being required to attend.

Mr. Hart asked for a full picture of what we are doing here.

Item 4 – Technology

Mr. Nanavaty agreed that the basic technology budget was minimal and asked if the \$215,102 was the status quo.

Mrs. Amodeo stated that would replace obsolete equipment.

Mr. Hart asked to re-do the budget sheet on page 88 to list status quo and one as initiative.

Mrs. Bittman asked for a document listing status quo dollars and prioritized equipment needed.

Mr. Hart stated that all technology requests should be made through that department not through the school budgets.

Mrs. Bittman requested an answer as to why the technology for the middle school did not come from the technology department.

Mr. Hart asked for a list of equipment to show the \$282,416 status quo and the list of items from the recommended budget.

Mrs. Bittman asked for it to be emailed to the Board and requested Mrs. Amodeo attend the February 7 meeting.

Item 5 – General Services

Mr. Bienkowski said this included the Superintendent's office and the business office system wide expenses. He recommended a district wide property appraisal for \$17,000.

Mr. Hart asked about the \$200,000 contingency money. Mr. Bienkowski feels it is important to have a reserve in an emergency.

Mr. Hart asked for a five to ten history on the district wide property appraisal and what the money was used for.

Mr. Gaines wanted to know why there were subs in each school budget but we also have a sub account in general services.

MOTION: Mr. Buzzi moved to adjourn. Mr. Nanavaty seconded. Vote: 7 ayes

Item 7 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Andrew Buzzi, Jr.
Secretary