## Board of Education Technology Subcommittee Newtown, Connecticut Wed, Dec 5, 2012 7:30 p.m.

Minutes of meeting in the Board offices at 3 Primrose Street.

Present: K. Alexander, Chair C. Amodeo

R. Gaines J. Robinson

L. Gejda

#### Item 1 – Call to Order

Mr. Alexander called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

Item 2 – Public Participation - none

### <u>Item 3 – Old Business</u>

a. <u>Discuss an inventory listing of needs computer needs based on current time information we have about the existing assessments</u>

New details are in from Smarter Balanced about 2014-15 testing requirements and we are reviewing those along with our current capabilities.

Newtown is to be in a scientific pilot of the testing at Reed and Sandy Hook in the spring. Plan for 3 hours of testing per grade per content area. This will cause us to need an assessment of our needs in those schools up soon to ensure they are ready.

# b. <u>Discussion on Board policy about technology budgeting</u>

Technology is now an essential tool for testing and teacher evaluation along with all the activities we have already moved. Administration of student data and curricula are also managed on line. Carmella will send along the details of previous budgets showing that we have generally requested .5% of the overall budget for technology equipment for the past years. While this amount was not always funded, the years where more could be spent make the need average out to .5%. A consistent expected amount for technology spending will fit in better with the district's Technology Plan (state mandated plan passed by the board in the Spring). The technology committee will bring a Policy recommendation to the Board at a future meeting. (Linda will get policy samples from other districts that have done this before, a few mentioned were: Manchester, Madison, West Hartford) In order to take advantage of the explosion of available technology for education, we should add a part- or full-time staff member to be a district educational technology resource. We need to consider the comparison of this policy to how much we would spend to fully fund our State Mandated Technology Plan which calls for quite an investment. We fund technology so that it is dependable for classroom work. We have survived on support from PTAs and grants where we can.

#### Item 4 – New Business

#### a. Review of work from District Technology Committee

Windows 7 upgrade. Special Ed computers have incompatibility with some software. Some testing software may need to be kept on older OS.

#### b. Discussion of upcoming work

900 machines still need to be updated. 100+ student machines at Sandy Hook. Laptop carts. Special Ed, Office areas at High School, special areas, guidance. It's amazing how much effort goes into keeping things running by hand (soldering new capacitors on to motherboards

because it's cheaper than upgrading a room full and better than having an inconsistent room). A day in the life of our technology people is getting ready to do an upgrade and people in the school need help since the tech is in the building (smartboard fix, software problem) and then more staff need support throughout the day and it is hard to get the upgrade done.

### c. <u>Discussion of technology curriculum</u>

The current technology curriculum has "computer" class through the grades where they are primarily taught how to use applications that they can use throughout their school career (including things like word processing and presentations applications). It is important that our students know how to use the applications like this however many students pick this up as they have assignments in class and applications change over time so learning an application doesn't have the same benefit as learning how to learn computers in general. There is a whole host of new applications that can help kids learn how to do things without having to be taught the workings of individual program. Software like Google Apps and App Inventor, move the students toward a "lab" system of learning that could replace the traditional "computer" class with an understanding of how the machine works as well as a comfort level in learning any new applications that come along.

#### <u>Item 4 – Adjournment</u>

MOTION: Mr. Gaines moved to adjourn. Mr. Alexander seconded. Vote: 2 ayes The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:
Keith Alexander
Chair

