

Board of Education Regular Meeting
March 20, 2018, 6:30 PM
Middletown Common Council Chambers

I. CALL TO ORDER

Board Members Present: Deborah Cain, Anita Dempsey-White, Chris Drake, Edward Ford, Sean King, Lisa Loomis, and Jonathon Pulino

Board Members Absent: Marilyn Rios, Cheryl McClellan, and Student Representative Tyler Wenzel

Others Present: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Michael Conner, Associate Superintendent Dr. Enza Macri, Director of Pupil Services and Special Education Amy Clarke, Director of District Operations and Fine Arts Marco Gaylord, Director of Facilities John Cross, Director of Grant Services Natalie Forbes, Manager of Human Resources Michele DiMauro, Acting Board Secretary Christine Bourne, Colleen Weiner, Principal Middletown High, Michael Skott, Director of Technology, Justin Carbonella, Donna Marino, Sebastian Giuliano, MFT Representative Janice Pawlak, and 26 visitors.

Board Chair Drake called the meeting to order at 6:36 PM.

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Board Member Jon Pulino led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

MOTION: Move to adopt the Agenda passed with a motion by Mr. King and a second by Ms. Cain – unanimous vote.

Dr. Conner announced that March is Board of Education Member appreciation month and he thanked the Board for their work and gave each member a gift.

Dr. Conner called Director of Pupil Services and Special Education Amy Clarke forward who introduced our new Supervisor of Special Education, Sarah Alberti sharing Ms. Alberti's excellent communication skills and calm personality. Ms. Alberti's references spoke about her professionalism and work ethic and how fortunate we are to have her on our leadership team. Ms. Albert thanked the Board for the opportunity to work in Middletown and has enjoyed getting to know everyone.

IV. DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS

A. UCONN Neag Recognition

Dr. Conner called WWMS 8th Grade Mathematics teacher Dwight Sharpe forward and recognized him on receiving a grant from the 2018 Rogers Education Innovative Fund through the Neag School of Education at UCONN. Mr. Sharpe thanked Michelle Gohagon, the district's Director of Technology and Professional Development, for her inspiration and interest in robotics which prompted his project. Robotics, Science, STEM and Mathematics are our future and the idea of our students having this hands-on opportunity is what we are hoping to achieve. Dr. Conner reported that Suzanne Wilson, chairwoman of the Rogers Educational Innovation Fund reported that "through his project, students are actively engaged to master math concepts through collaboration, questioning and problem solving; and, in so doing, demonstrate higher levels of engagement and achievement."

B. Equal Opportunity Schools

Dr. Conner called forward Middletown High School (MHS) Principal Colleen Weiner and students Angelica Vargas and Stephen Hill to thank them for helping to develop more opportunities through AP with a "voice for choice" and the Equal Opportunity Schools Conference. Students Stephen Hill and

Angelica Vargas talked about getting more diversity in the AP level courses and offering opportunities for all students representing differing populations in these courses and mirror the diversity of Middletown population.

V. PUBLIC SESSION

Chair Drake explained the rules of Public Session.

Grady Faulkner, resident and council member, praised the accomplishment of Dwight Sharpe and commended his work with the Middletown students.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

VI.A. Report of Student Representative

Tyler Wenzel is absent so there is no report.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION: Move to approve the Consent Agenda passed with a motion by Mr. Ford and a second by Mr. Pulino – unanimous vote.

- VII.A. Minutes of February 13, 2018 BOE Regular Meeting
- VII.B. Minutes of February 27, 2018 BOE Special Meeting (6:15 PM)
- VII.C. Minutes of February 27, 2018 BOE/Common Council Joint Budget Workshop (6:30 PM)
- VII.D. Extended Field Trip - Adult Education Credit Diploma Program Trip to Springfield Museums, MA - April 26, 2018
- VII.E. Extended Field Trip - Adult Education Credit Diploma Program Trip to Wistariahurst Museum, Holyoke, MA - May 17, 2018
- VII.F. Extended Field Trip - MHS - Ultimate Frisbee Trip to Regional Tournament in Massachusetts - May 19 - 20, 2018
- VII.G. Extended Field Trip - Spencer School to Sturbridge, MA - May 25, 2018
- VII.H. Extended Field Trip - MHS World Language Dept Trip to Portugal & Spain - April 12 - 20, 2019
- VII.I. Policy #5141.3 Health Assessments and Immunizations (Revision) - Second Reading

VIII. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

VIII.A. Financial Report

Chair Drake reported that Manager of Financial Operations Lynda MacPherson is not in attendance and there were no questions on the financial reports.

VIII.B. Facilities Department

Director of Facilities John Cross reported that the Farm Hill playscape is in the hands of the Public Works Department at this point. Mr. Cross thanked the custodial and maintenance staff for their work during the snow storms and wanted the Board to know of their efforts during these storms.

VIII.C. Personnel Report

There were no questions for Manager of Human Resources Michele DiMauro.

VIII.D. Transportation Report

There were no questions for Manager of Transportation Mark Langton.

IX. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Conner reported that his Entry Plan is complete and he will be provided an update and recommendations at the April Board meeting. He will be meeting with MSAA, MFT and Donna Marino will identify stakeholders for the Strategic Planning Team. Dr. Conner and the Strategic Planning Team anticipate providing a report in August on their work.

Dr. Conner introduced Joe DiMartino and Michael Nast from Center for Secondary School Redesign. Mr. DiMartino distributed a book, "They're not Stupid". A big piece is student driven learning. Strategies include shadowing students, ongoing conversations with students, so that each school can create their own plan using each of the gear structures. Their plan for the Spring is to shadow students at every school, do an all based student forum on April 4th with five students from each grade level discussing what their vision of what their schools should look like, create a collaborative exhibition and present it to the staff and students at the end of the day on April 4th. They will do an initiative mapping to give the administrators a chance to see all that is going on in the schools and see if they can consolidate to create a plan. In addition, they will be doing a summer institute, August 6-8, for Middletown, Norwich and Shelton teachers to create groups of teachers to an effort to move to the student approach. Mike then spoke about his experience shadowing a student at Keigwin and how welcomed he felt and the positive atmosphere at Keigwin. He is going to shadow students at the other schools.

IX. C. 2016-2017 District Climate Review

Donna Marino reported that we are mandated by law to survey Climate every two years. Today she is going to show the panorama data results of the survey. The Climate Survey tells us the store and the Developmental Assets gives a deeper understanding of what the students are feeling. She presented comparisons from 2017 to 2016 if there is a sense of belonging; what the relationship between student and teacher is; bullying; safety; and whether they value school. The graphs show that anything over 70% is favorable. Grades 6-12 show areas in need of growth like school belonging and school engagement. Academic and Social climate are also fairly low. Teacher relationships in grade 3-5 are better than the older grades. Lisa Loomis asked if Donna has what she needs to see it grade by grade to better assist them individually. Donna reported that the schools look at data and create their own strategies specific to the individual school. The Staff Survey showed that resources are the biggest concerns, mostly centered on specialized staff and facilities. Staff felt teacher/student relationships are successful. Staff felt that they needed more opportunities to meet with families. Dr. Conner remarked that expectations for students are low at 65% and there needs to be a greater focus on raising the bar for all students. Sean King remarked that we need to look at refreshing the passion of the teachers and making them feel an important part of these strategies. Donna reported that they did a new parent survey that shows we need to do more outreach to our minority parents because the was not a strong enough participation from these parents to be able to show what their needs are. The parents that did respond show a very favorable response. The parents believe that there are few barriers, the climate is good and the school does fit the children, but we need to look at who responded. While we do believe we are doing a good job in these areas, we need to get that word out. Dr. Conner reported that it is important to increase the parent participation to represent our demographics. Donna reported that the home visitors were engaged in helping our families fill out the surveys. School Governance Council is mandated by the State of Connecticut based on a failing school status. These Councils have elections, agendas and minutes in a very formal fashion. Some of our schools have just PTA's, a Governance Council or both. The Family Survey tells us that we need to engage the Hispanic/Latino and

Black/African population; increase Family Community Engagement; home visiting; personalized communication; work with trusted partners and positive phone calls.

Youth Services Coordinator Justin Carbonella and three students Ana Zakarian, Jade Levy and Alan Cunningham of the Mayoral Youth Cabinet spoke. Justin explained the 40 Developmental Assets program and the key principals in engaging our youth. School success rises as levels of assets rise. The survey was taken three times to all students in grades 7-12, over 1,300 students and 160 questions in a scientific manner.

Jade Levy spoke of “other adult relationships” to offer new perspective, insight and valuable lessons. 1 in 10 students reported that they have no adults to support them. Caring school climate helps students do better in school. There are many students who feel that students don’t care about them. There was significant growth in the area of Bonding to School.

Ana Zakarian spoke of Cultural Competence importance for students. We may not be doing enough in school to change cultural competency in the schools. High Expectations: nearly 50% of the students aren’t sure that the teachers have high expectations for them. Ana spoke of some Next Steps – in April there will be a Teen Summit to go over the results of the survey.

Alan Cunningham talked about Youth as Resources: This is one of the most important for students. This asset has gone up 5% since the last survey covered youth as resources at school. There is much work to be done in this asset. Positive Identity has seen a decrease in all four of its assets, especially in the personal power asset – whether a student has control over what happens to them.

Board member Lisa Loomis reported that some residents spoke to her about Middletown High School not doing a walk-out and that the students didn’t have a voice in how that day was planned. She reported that she is not at all criticizing how Middletown handled that day, because others reported to her that Middletown did a better job than other communities, but she was relating these assets to planning this type of day. Dr. Conner agreed that engaging the students in that way is an excellent idea.

IX.D. Next Generation Accountability Index

Dr. Conner called Dr. Macri and Michelle Gohagon to the podium to discuss the Next Generation Accountability Report regarding closing of the achievement gap.

Dr. Macri and Michele Gohagon outlined the 12 indicators. Our accountability index score did not increase but went down 1.1%. There is an intricate formula which they explained in detail. Out of 1,350 points, we scored 947. The percentage rating is more important because the points will change due to the indicators that we participate in. Michele explained the rubric, the ELA gap components and the participate rates. Our Growth Targets are not what we are looking for, our preparation for CCR has increased. Dr. Conner reported that we can eliminate study halls so that the students are taking more classes that will increase their exposure and increase the percentage indicators. This will cost the district money but will be well worth the investment in our students. Michelle explained that CSSR is about balance and giving the students the opportunity to work at their success levels and move on to limit the stress and structure and move more at their own pace. Dr. Conner reported that research in 2017 that one effect factor with limited effect on a student is actually homework. We have to look at a less traditional concept to be successful. There was reduced ELA growth from 2015-16 to 2016-17. With regard to Math we are seeing some growth except in the area of high needs. Dr. Conner explains that this is an internal data analysis, us against us, and the next slides will be an external analysis, us against the state. With regard to chronic absenteeism – one of our greatest celebrations in the district – to make sure that students want to come to school and parents understand the need for the students to be in school. College and career ready indicators show a growth of 6%, a growth in their testing scores and students on track for graduation. With regard to physical fitness enrollment has a small gain, and the arts

access a decrease, as explained with scheduling issues. Michelle showed the Percent Points Earned Comparison showing we are within the trend. Our goal is to see an increase in the state gap performance. A review of individual school's achievement was shown and individual meetings with each school have happened and strategies are being put in place with each school. There is individual school accountability. Macdonough came off of the focus school list due to their achievements in Science. Chairman Drake questioned where the Macdonough STEM students are reported and Michelle reported that Macdonough is their home school for the purposes of this report. There are 22 students in this program. Michelle explained how the state rates the school as a category school and what can impact that designation. Dr. Macri explained how the Gifted and Talented students are selected which includes more criteria so that disadvantaged and minority students can be identified based on other criteria that they bring to learning other than the straight testing standard. Dr. Macri talked about the efforts the district made to balance the schools by closing a school or redistricting and the issues that arose from those efforts. This may need to be revisited soon and it will help with these scores in balancing the populations at the elementary level. Chairman Drake explained that we are seeing the statistical repercussions of not redistricting and potentially eliminating one elementary school. Lisa Loomis stated that she is not comfortable moving students to a different school based solely on their color. Chairman Drake wanted to know how the STEM program will be measured as far as overall impact on the Macdonough School scores.

Dr. Macri reviewed the Alliance District: Index and Points and showed Middletown's points, with Norwalk being number 1. Dr. Conner stated that Middletown will be number 1.

IX.E. District News

Chair Drake stated that there is an early dismissal for tomorrow. He also mentioned the Teach to One program and whether or not the Board wants to adopt this as program to teach mathematics in the new middle school. He also thanked the Nathan Hale School in Norwalk for welcoming him and impressing him during the visit.

X. COMMITTEES

X.A. Budget Committee

Committee Chair Sean King reviewed the Financial Report with a reduced deficit to the certified salary line due to grant funding; a surplus in the paraprofessional line by reducing the number of positions; updated health insurance costs. We continued discussions on the Food Services program. We discussed processes and effectiveness in maximizing reimbursements for Medicaid. The next meeting we will be looking at doing an RFQ to go out for legal services.

X.B. Communications Committee – nothing to report.

Committee Chair Marilyn Rios was not present so there was no report.

X.C. Curriculum Committee

Committee Chair Lisa Loomis reported that at the last meeting they discussed curriculum at the elementary level and the cultural responsiveness with the curriculum. There is an interest in purchasing culturally responsive books and providing education to classroom teachers, including certain holidays and black history month expanding throughout the school year. There was discussion about equity in PTA fundraising and how the money is being spent. Ms. Loomis remarked that Dr. Macri, Amy Mullen and Michelle Gohagon are working very hard on these equity issues. Chair Drake responded that he is also concerned about how the PTAs are raising and spending money noting the economic disparity in the ability to raise money is evident. Dr. Macri reported that this is another reason why economic equity

in the schools is important. At this point, the district sometimes picks up the cost to make the purchases more equitable when the PTAs are spending on technology or school-based products.

X.D. Facilities Committee

Committee Chair Deborah Cain reported that the meeting is scheduled for tomorrow and she will have items to report at the next meeting. She commended John Cross and the City for working together on the facilities projects. She thought it was great that the children were able to vote on the color of the new playscape.

X.E. Policy Committee

Committee Chair Cheryl McClellan was not present so there was no report.

X.F. Representative Reports (ACES/Cultural Council/TEMS)

ACES: Rep Chris Drake reported that they are working on their budget and the big item for Middletown is what they intend to do with TEMS. The tuition costs are of significant concern to us.

Cultural Council: Rep Anita Dempsey-White had nothing to report.

TEMS: Rep Cheryl McClellan is not in attendance so there is no report.

X.G. Ad Hoc Expulsion Review Committee

Ms. Dempsey-White had nothing to report.

X.H. WWMS/Keigwin Building Committee

Building Committee Vice Chair Chris Drake reported that we do have an architect – TSKP and the next Building Committee meeting is Monday at Central office at 6 PM.

XI. ACTION ITEMS

XI.A. Adoption of the 2018-19 Board of Education Budget

Dr. Conner reported that an adjustment may need to be made for 466 positions, an additional PE Teacher, added .5 teacher due to new AP Courses with a total increase of 2.48%. Chair Drake reported that the Mayor has been informally informed of the number change.

MOTION: Move to adopt budget in the amount of \$83,853,409, a 2.48% increase over this year was made by Mr. King and a second by Ms. Dempsey White.

Mr. King commended Dr. Conner and the staff for crafting this budget in a transparent and responsible way including the community conversations, gathering information, climate surveys and other techniques used to formulate this budget to accomplish the goals of the upcoming year. This was a lot of hard work by many people with the focus on what is best for our kids with a modest increase that can be easily absorbed by the taxpayers.

VOTE: Adoption of the budget in the amount of \$83,853,409 passed with a unanimous vote.

XI.B. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Between the City of Middletown and BOE: Understanding Use of Building Facilities

Chair Drake reported that this document is back for another review as the City requested changes which the Board must vote on. Dr. Macri reviewed the changes that were suggested by the City's Finance and Government Committee. In addition, we wanted to ensure that they could use the fields as long as the Middletown High students were not. A dispute resolution clause was added. In addition, language to address the City Charter was added.

MOTION: Move to approve the revised Memorandum of Understanding passed with a motion by Ms. Cain and a second by Ms. Loomis – unanimous vote.

XI.C. Bylaw #9010 Limits of Authority (Revision) – First Reading

Chair Drake stated that there was discussion at the Policy Committee meeting about the role of the Board of Education. The language of the Policy Committee is a CABE-alternative to the existing Board policy. He believes that the Board already practices this but this action puts it in writing.

MOTION: Move to approve the first reading of Bylaw #9010 Limits of Authority (Revision) passed with a motion by Mr. Drake and a second by Mr. Ford – unanimous vote.

There was discussion about the need to have this type of policy amongst Board members. Basically, if there is a rule at an individual school, then it applies to the Board members, as well. In addition, no one Board member can enact change on their own.

XI.D. Bylaw #9130 Committees (Revision) – First Reading

Chair Drake explained that this was his attempt to consolidate the Communications and Policy committees and to spell out the jurisdiction of each committee as well as to put in writing some things that already happen but are not in writing.

MOTION: Move to approve the first reading of Bylaw #9130 Committees (Revision) passed with a motion by Mr. Drake and a second by Ms. Loomis – unanimous vote.

XI.E. Policy #5141.25 Students with Special Health Care Needs (Revision) – Second Reading

Mr. King stated he requested clarification on terminology and as Policy Committee Chair Cheryl McClellan is not in attendance tonight he suggested tabling this policy.

MOTION: Move to table the second reading of Policy #5141.25 Students with Special Health Care Needs (Revision) was made with a motion by Mr. King and a second by Mr. Ford – unanimous vote.

XI.B. Line Item Transfers

In Manager of Financial Operations Lynda MacPherson's absence, Budget Committee Chair Sean King reviewed the line items transfers.

MOTION: Move to approve the Line Item Transfers was made with a motion by Mr. King and a second by Mr. Ford.

Mr. King reported we need to remove the line item transfer for Journal number 8612.50 from Student Transportation, as discussed during the Budget Committee meeting for a conversation to be held with Rich Labrie about the additional invoice received.

MOTION TO AMEND: Move to amend the approval of the line item transfers as noted above passed with a motion by Mr. King and a second by Ms. Cain – unanimous vote.

XII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Chair Drake did not have any future agenda items other than having Board member Ed Ford give words of encouragement at the end of each meeting.

XII.A. New Items

No new items

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Move to adjourn at 10:17 PM passed with a motion by Mr. King and a second by Mr. Pulino
– unanimous vote.

Respectfully Submitted,



Christopher Drake
Acting Secretary

CD/mp