

Tuesday, September 11, 2018

MINUTES OF THE (Second) SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION, held September 11, 2018, at Bridgeport Regional Aquaculture Science & Technology Education Center, 60 St. Stephens Road, Bridgeport, Connecticut

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m.

Present were Chair John Weldon, Vice President Hernan Illingworth, Secretary Jessica Martinez, Sybil Allen, Joe Sokolovic, Ben Walker and Chris Taylor. Dennis Bradley arrived subsequently as noted.

Supt. Aresta Johnson, Ed.D., was present.

RECOGNITIONS:

Mr. Weldon observed that today was 9/11 and a lot of people didn't make it home tonight seventeen years ago. He asked for a moment of silence.

Mr. Weldon asked for a moment of silence for the passing of Mr. William Sidarweck, school psychologist at Harding High.

Mr. Weldon said Spanish translation services were available.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS:

Jinardy Fulgenico of Bassick High reported on her school. She highlighted the school's the new principal, Dr. Raiola.

Rafael Rivera, a junior at Bassick, urged attendance at fall sports: football, soccer and cross-country.

Emily Niveló of the IT School at Fairchild Wheeler reported on her school. Among the items she highlighted were the smooth start to the beginning of the year, the Back to School Night on September 20th, and SGC/PTSO meetings on September 27th.

Ethan Wei Aoki of the Aerospace School at Fairchild Wheeler reported on his school. Among the items he highlighted were PSAT preparations for the October 10 test, after-school SAT classes, and college readiness day.

Jennifer Martinez of the Aerospace School at Fairchild Wheeler reported on a grant to fund programs that support desegregation and the upcoming Back to School Night.

Anthony Miller of the Biotech School at Fairchild Wheeler reported on his school. He highlighted a visit by Senator Chris Murphy to the school.

Damarys Seda, a senior at Harding High, reported on her school. She highlighted last Friday's football game at home and the ribbon-cutting ceremony. Boys' soccer will host a game on September 10th.

Nathaniel Perez of Harding High also spoke on the ribbon-cutting ceremony for which he was the master of ceremonies. He thanked the board members for attending the event.

Alayjah Evans of Central High said there was a smooth opening to the brand-new building. The ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on August 31st. She thanked Dr.

Johnson and board members who attended. Family Night will be held on September 13th.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Karen Jackson, a City Council member, said she was a parent with three boys in the system. She said the Education Committee has a meeting tomorrow including an item on an anti-bullying task force. She said the district did not have compliance officers or safe climate officers. She said bullying is not being documented properly. She also said she was approached by a constituent about an undercover officer who is cutting off night recreation activities at Dunbar School.

Ms. Jackson said she was confused about why every child gets bused at Fairchild Wheeler while last year her son was not bused to Bullard Havens despite living far from school. She said there should be greater awareness of opportunities for children in Civil Air Patrol.

Crystal Mack said our children have lost a wonderful principal from Bassick High. She said teachers can't teach our kids if they don't like our kids and know nothing about ethnicity. She spoke out about kids being incarcerated for minor things. She urged home economics classes be instituted.

APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES:

Mr. Illingworth moved to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of August 27, 2018. The motion was seconded by Ms. Allen.

The motion was approved by a 7-0 vote. Voting in favor were

members Weldon, Illingworth, Martinez, Allen, Taylor, Walker and Sokolovic. Mr. Taylor abstained.

Ms. Allen moved to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of August 27, 2018. The motion was seconded by Mr. Taylor.

The motion was approved by a 7-0 vote. Voting in favor were members Weldon, Illingworth, Martinez, Allen, Taylor, Walker and Sokolovic. Mr. Taylor abstained.

Mr. Bradley arrived at the meeting.

CHAIR REPORT:

Mr. Weldon commended Dr. Johnson and the staff for the ribbon-cuttings for Central High and John Lewis Memorial Field.

COMMITTEE REPORTS AND REFERRALS:

Mr. Taylor reported on the Facilities Committee. He noted it was Rosh Hashanah and wished everyone a happy new year.

In response to a question, Mr. Sokolovic said the item he referred to the Facilities Committee had to do with security protocols and procedures regarding students entering schools efficiently in the morning and the confiscation of food and water.

Mr. Walker referred the issue of school gardens to the Facilities Committee. He noted Dr. Otuwa requested at the last meeting an item on planting a tree at Fairchild Wheeler. He also urged there be a discussion of the permanent

location for Classical Studies Magnet Academy.

Mr. Taylor said he had received numerous calls about Harding High and the basketball court not being official size. He said Dr. Johnson indicated that John Bagley believed the court size was appropriately sized.

Mr. Taylor said he also heard complaints that the freezer at Harding is not properly wired and food is being lost.

Dr. Johnson said Larry Schiller of O & G indicated the basketball court was of regulation size. She said she asked Mr. Bagley and he said it seemed okay. She said she will have Michelle Otero provide specific information and look into the issue.

Mr. Sokolovic said there was a prior referral regarding changing the naming policies for facilities. He asked if a legal opinion had been received about selling naming rights. Mr. Taylor said he thought the issue died on the vine. Mr. Weldon said the superintendent's office could seek the legal opinion.

Mr. Bradley referred an item to the Facilities Committee regarding the RFP for the design at Bassick. He said he also received calls about the size of the basketball court at Harding.

Mr. Bradley said Multicultural Magnet has been requesting a playground for quite some time and asked that it be referred to the Facilities Committee.

Ms. Martinez reported on the Finance Committee. The committee will meet tomorrow.

Mr. Walker reported the Teaching & Learning Committee would meet on September 18th.

Mr. Illingworth said the Personnel Committee would next meet in October.

Mr. Sokolovic said the Students & Families Committee met on August 30th. A compromise was reached on the magnet school policy and some minor details have to be worked out before it is brought to the board. He said the policy should be finalized at the next committee meeting on September 13th

Mr. Taylor said Gail Janensch of the League of Women voter appeared at a meeting requesting to put some posters about voting in schools. Dr. Johnson said Ms. Janensch can contact her office and complete a form for permission.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT AND AGENDA:

Dr. Johnson said the opening of school went pretty well, with Batalla School's opening delayed by two days due to an air quality issue.

Dr. Johnson said she met with Congressman Himes to discuss leadership programs available for students.

Dr. Johnson said Senator Chris Murphy was at Fairchild Wheeler School to discuss diversity and inclusion with adults and students.

Dr. Jonson said the next Foundation for Excellence meeting for the district will take place tomorrow at her office.

Dr. Johnson said she attended a department meeting with Mr. Ganim and other city departments. She said there were

conversations about having a joint meeting with the Bridgeport delegation to discuss budget issues.

Dr. Johnson said she had a conversation with Dr. Ferguson of ABCD regarding an expanded partnership with the district, including financial literacy and community service opportunities for students.

Mr. Walker moved to approve to items I to VII. The motion was seconded by Mr. Allen.

Mr. Taylor said he would recuse himself from voting on Item VI, number 3.

The motion was unanimously approved. Mr. Taylor abstained from the vote on Item VI, number 3.

OLD BUSINESS:

Mr. Weldon said he sent out a poll to the board members for a meeting on 2018-19 board goals. The proposed date is September 22nd. Mr. Illingworth suggested there be a facilitator and more than two hours be allocated.

Mr. Walker noted when Ms. Baraka held such a meeting as chair she brought an outline of goals as a framework for discussion by the board. Ms. Martinez suggested three hours be allocated for the meeting.

Mr. Walker suggested Dr. Johnson help the board locate a facilitator.

Dr. Johnson said two applicants had been interviewed for the chief financial officer position. An additional interview with another applicant will take place this month.

Dr. Johnson said as of last week there has only been one applicant for the school construction liaison position. Interviews will take place this month.

In response to a question, Dr. Johnson said the current chief financial officer did not apply for the position. She said the school construction liaison incumbent did apply, but later reconsidered.

NEW BUSINESS:

The next item was on high school students prevented from attending first period classes. Dr. Johnson said this happens at Bassick and Central. She said the bell rings at 7:43; if the students arrive at 8:10 in some cases they have been brought into the auditorium and are not allowed to go to first period.

Dr. Johnson said staff met with the principals about the process and there will be work with the principals to come up with something that is much better than excluding the students from the entire first period.

Mr. Taylor said in college he noted it was disruptive when students arrived late, although he was often a late arrival at his high school classes. He said he wondered if the students who managed to get there on time would be deprived of their education.

Dr. Johnson said she provided a copy of the revised organizational chart in the board packet and it also appears on the district's website.

Dr. Johnson noted a correction to the District at a Glance.

Barnum School was visited on September 5th and Batalla School on September 6th.

Mr. Taylor moved the meeting be adjourned. The motion was seconded by Ms. Allen and unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod

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