

Thursday, September 13, 2018

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STUDENTS AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE OF THE BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION, held September 13, 2018, at Bridgeport City Hall, 45 Lyon Terrace, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The meeting was called to order at 5:38 p.m. Present were members Chair Joseph Sokolovic and Ben Walker. Board member Hernan Illingworth was present.

Mr. Walker moved to approve the committee's minutes of August 30, 2018. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic and unanimously approved.

The next item was on magnet school policies.

Mr. Sokolovic said two weeks ago the committee basically came to an agreement.

Mr. Sokolovic suggested a provision calling for a warning letter to be sent to parents warning of possible reassignment in the event of a second D grade.

Terese McGuire, principal of Park City Magnet, said when progress reports go out her school sends a cover letter that notes the section of the policy. Mr. Walker said by the time a student has a D or below in two consecutive marking periods in a core subject remediation it is too late.

Mr. Walker and Mr. Sokolovic suggested the reference to a time limit be changed to ten business days as opposed to school days.

Mr. Walker said he believed the compromise the committee had reached had led to a better policy for all of us.

In response to a question, Mr. Walker said the intervention with students should begin when a student receives one D in a core subject. Mr. Illingworth said that should be made clear in the policy. Mr. Walker noted the SRBI process kicks in whether the student is in a core subject or not. Mr. Illingworth said his concern was that the policies require parents to have notice of the situation.

Mr. Illingworth said he was glad to see an appeal process for reassignment had been added. Mr. Sokolovic said he personally didn't believe there should be a final appeal possible to the Board of Education. Mr. Walker said he thought it was unlikely the board would be involved in many such appeals.

Mr. Sokolovic said he agreed to change the reference from school days to business days in the appeal process.

Mr. Walker said his philosophy was that not every elementary magnet student may be qualified for Central Magnet, but if they want to go to Central Magnet they would be motivated to do so.

The discussion then turned to high school requirements. Mr. Sokolovic said he did not believe there was an issue with the verbiage. Mr. Walker thanked Assistant Superintendent Janet Brown-Clayton for using the Oxford comma.

Mr. Illingworth noted in the past some Central Magnet students preferred to take regular Central courses instead of magnet classes. Mr. Sokolovic noted the provisions called

for magnet students to successfully complete one AP or early college entry/dual enrollment course.

Mr. Illingworth suggested approving the language as is and addressing the issue at the full board meeting. Mr. Sokolovic suggested Ms. Brown-Clayton have a conversation with Dr. Anekwe about the practices at Central Magnet. He thought that Dr. Anekwe, based on her comments at the committee, would be on board with more stringent standards.

There was a discussion of the diploma given to Central Magnet students.

Mr. Sokolovic said he would like to present the policy at the next board meeting. Mr. Walker noted it would not take effect until next year.

Mr. Walker moved *“that we present the revised magnet school program to the full Board of Education at the next available meeting.”* The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic and unanimously approved.

The next item was on the district’s magnet school sibling policy.

Mr. Sokolovic said he would like to see a provision that indicates siblings must meet all requirements contained in the magnet school policy.

Mr. Walker noted we live in a community where not every parent can afford to take their children to two different schools. He said the policy was intended to protect the family from having to make a decision to keep its

academically accelerated child from going to the magnet school.

Mr. Sokolovic said a sibling could be left in the magnet school who is not able to keep up with the academics, while they might have more interventionists and services available at their neighborhood schools. He said he did not see it as hurting the children to put them where they can be best served.

Ms. McGuire said she had seen it both ways. She said parents of a magnet school child are usually aware of the standards for the second child. In another case, a parent decided that a sibling of a magnet school student should not go to the magnet school. Mr. Walker said he believed most children who are challenged rise to the challenge, but he was concerned about the one family out there that might be adversely affected.

Mr. Walker said his wife teaches in a school whether some children do not speak English at home and are illiterate in the language they do speak. He said you cannot be an educator without having a heart; he said he prayed every day that our administrators are making decisions for their children, not for their school or program.

Mr. Illingworth said he was very happy with the work of the committee on the policies and said he feels more comfortable after hearing the magnet school principals indicate they have had to reassign very few students.

Mr. Walker moved that *“we present the Bridgeport Board of Education elementary magnet school sibling policy to the full board at our next available board meeting.”* The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic and unanimously approved.

Ms. Brown-Clayton reported on the grant funding of Bridgeport Military Academy(BMA). She said when the magnet policies started being worked on BMA was receiving funds, but no longer receive funds. She said Dr. Johnson will recommend policies regarding deselection for BMA.

Mr. Walker moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic and unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod