

Tuesday, February 25, 2020

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE OF THE BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION, held February 25, 2020, at Bridgeport City Hall, 45 Lyon Terrace, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The meeting was called to order at 5:08 p.m. Present were members Chair Joseph Sokolovic and Joseph Lombard. Board member Albert Benejan was present.

Mr. Lombard moved to approve the committee's minutes of November 19, 2019. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic and unanimously approved.

Mr. Lombard moved to approve the minutes of the meeting of January 21, 2020. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic and unanimously approved.

The next agenda item was on a nutrition survey and program presentation by Craig Gordon.

Mr. Gordon participated in the meeting by telephone.

Mr. Gordon said the workbook he provided to Mr. Sokolovic was a measurable prevention program. He

said the goal is helping people build their capacity by getting them one to three levels healthier than they are. He said the question is how to get funding to scale such a program up.

Mr. Gordon said data indicating better nutrition leads to better grades and works against the school-to-prison pipeline would improve the chance of gaining funding. He said he was proposing a three-month program beginning March 15th. He said it would have to be largely an after-school program.

Mr. Gordon said improved lipid panels and improved A1C data with students and improved attendance would be a big deal and be groundbreaking.

Mr. Gordon said the proposal is to give each student a workbook to write an essay in.

In response to a question, Mr. Gordon said he believed he could work with some professors and doctors he knew to gather data for the baseline study. He said about 45 minutes per student would be needed. It would involve two presentations per month to each student in a group.

In response to a question, Mr. Gordon said he would be available to do the presentations, along with the professor and a retired police lieutenant, among others, who are professional about health issues.

Mr. Lombard noted the cost would be \$200 per pupil for two tests, the workbooks, and presentations. Mr. Gordon said the funds would compensate the medical staff and people running the tests.

Mr. Sokolovic said it sounded like a great program, but it seemed to be unaffordable. He said he also had concern about the privacy of data. He said it was not a good fit for the district at this time. Mr. Lombard said he agreed.

The next agenda item was on school field trips.

Helen Giles, principal of Classical Studies, said she has a friend who is the mother of Donovan Mitchell, a Utah Jazz NBA player, who has a foundation. Ms. Giles said she created a travel experience award and the foundation was willing to fund a three-day trip to Washington, D.C. for students. Students had to write essays on a visit to Washington. She said participating students had to have A's and B's and 1's and 2's for conduct. The trip would take place from April 30th to May 2nd.

Ms. Giles said 22 students submitted essays and 12 students were chosen. Mr. Lombard said the chaperone-to-student ratio seemed fine, along insurance provisions. Ms. Giles said all the students' expenses would be covered, along with the expenses of the chaperones. She described the previous use of the tour company and security coverage.

Mr. Lombard moved “*to approve the Classical Studies Magnet Academy field trip to Washington, D.C. and send this to the full board.*” The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic and unanimously approved.

Herminio Planas, executive director of elementary education, said Black Rock School does a Nature’s Classroom trip every year. The proposal is to have 29 5th graders and three teachers attend at Yarmouth, Massachusetts. He said funds were raised for all the students to participate. Students and parents hear a presentation and are then able to sign up for the trip.

Mr. Planas said other schools are encouraged to send students to Nature’s Classrooms but there are costs associated with the trip, which is why it may not take place in every school. In response to a question, he said the 29 students might represent most of the 5th grade

Mr. Planas said the chaperones included two current teachers and a retired teacher, all of whom have been on previous trips.

Mr. Lombard moved “*to approve Black Rock School’s field to trip Yarmouth, Massachusetts.*” The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic and unanimously approved.

Mr. Planas said both Hooker School and Winthrop School are planning a Washington trip similar to the Classical Studies' trip.

He said Hooker would like to send 44 6th, 7th and 8th grade students to see museums, landmarks, and Arlington National Cemetery. There will be eight chaperones.

In response to a question, Mr. Planas said any school trip involves checks by the nurse on students' medical issues. He said the safety plan includes the person who carries the medication.

There was a discussion of the wording of the board Policy 6201 on insurance coverage. After discussion, it seemed the coverage for all the trips met the criteria.

Mr. Lombard moved "*to approve Thomas Hooker's field trip to Washington, D.C.*" The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic and unanimously approved.

Mr. Planas said the field trip by John Winthrop School to Washington includes 38 students, six chaperones. He said the trip would visit different sites than the Hooker trip.

In response to a question, Mr. Planas said he was not aware of the financial details and fundraising. He said the trip will include students from Grades 6 to 8.

Mr. Lombard moved “*to approve John Winthrop Elementary School’s field trip to Washington, D.C.*” The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic and unanimously approved.

The next agenda item was discussion about a curfew in the city.

Mr. Planas said he believed the city was holding off on anything related to a curfew.

Mr. Sokolovic said he brought the matter before the committee because there was a discussion of a curfew that would apply to students. He said he wanted it made clear that any changes to the education of students had go through the Board of Education. He asked whether or not we would educate students to submit to police searches and what their Fourth Amendment rights are. He said he feared our students would grow up feeling like they’re living in a police state.

Mr. Sokolovic said he did not agree with a curfew and believed we should not have police in school buildings to teach students to give up their rights. He said if it was going to happen it should come through the

board. He said he asked this be communicated to the city and Mr. Testani.

Mr. Lombard said he agreed.

Mr. Lombard moved the meeting be adjourned. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic and unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod