

Monday, June 17, 2019

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE OF THE BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION, held June 17, 2019, at Bridgeport City Hall, 45 Lyon Terrace, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The meeting was called to order at 5:43 p.m. Present were members Chair Joseph Sokolovic and LaMar Kennedy. Board member Maria Pereira was present. Committee member arrived Joseph Lombard subsequently as noted.

Supt. Dr. Aresta L. Johnson was present.

Mr. Kennedy moved approval of the minutes of May 22, 2019. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic and unanimously approved.

The next agenda item was discussion and possible action on the renewal of the University School special education contract for 2019-20.

Mr. Kennedy said he thought the district was going to start a new program at Central High. Dr. Johnson said there was a discussion internally, a committee was formed, a site visit took place, and the cost analysis found it would cost about the same amount, if not more, than the current program.

Dr. Johnson said she reached out to The University School and the contract amount was reduced by \$125,000 to \$875,000. She said they were willing to work with the same number of students, forty.

Dr. Johnson said she wanted to add language to the contract that certified teaching staff will be required to participate in curriculum professional development to enable alignment with the curriculum in the district.

Dr. Johnson said Ms. Pereira mentioned language needed to be added on indemnification and background checks. Ms. Pereira said provisions on sexual misconduct insurance were needed as well. Dr. Johnson said the language could be captured from other contracts.

In response to a question, Dr. Johnson said this was a one-year contract.

Ms. Pereira said if there is going to be an in-house plan in the future she hoped it would not be rushed as occurred under Supt. Vallas. She added there was a riot in the building when he established Pride Academy.

Mr. Kennedy said the program presented at the last meeting sounded great, but the cost savings of \$125,000 is a plus. He said he believed an initiative was needed to keep students in their local high schools.

Ms. Pereira noted this was the cheapest out-of-district placement the district undertakes.

In response to a question, Dr. Johnson said the costs savings were provided to Ms. Siegel for budgetary purposes.

Mr. Kennedy moved *“to approve renewal of the University School special education contract for the 2019-20 school year.”* The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic and unanimously approved.

Dr. Johnson said the start date would be August 1, 2019.

John DiDonato, chief of specialized education reform, said this would probably be his last committee meeting and he wanted to share some views and provide some guidance to the committee in terms of special education. He said since 2012 there have been perceptions of special education that have led us to some erroneous conclusions.

Mr. Sokolovic apologized for not getting the special education report on the agenda.

Mr. Lombard arrived at the meeting.

Mr. Kennedy moved *“to postpone agenda number item 3, discussion and possible action on ideas to reduce out-of-school suspension, including reverse suspensions.”* The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic and unanimously approved.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 5:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod