

SHERMAN BOARD OF EDUCATION
SHERMAN, CONNECTICUT 06784
REGULAR MEETING, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2017
LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER, THE SHERMAN SCHOOL
7:00 PM

A regular meeting of the Sherman Board of Education was called to order by Mr. Hanley at 6:21 PM. Mr. Hanley moved and Dr. Alexander seconded to move immediately into Executive Session. Mr. Hanley moved and Dr. Alexander seconded to move out of Executive Session at 7:14 PM and the general meeting resumed in the Library Media Center of the Sherman School.

1. PRESENT:

For the Board:	Dr. Alexander, Mrs. Diotte, Mrs. Enright, Mr. Hackett, Mr. Hanley and Mrs. Seeger
Absent:	Mrs. Lenihan
For the Administration:	Dr. Melendez, Ms. Edwards and Mrs. Snowden
School Staff:	Mr. Butler
SPTO:	Mrs. Ribisl
Town Residents:	14 Residents

The Board and attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. CELEBRATIONS:

Teacher of the Year

Dr. Melendez introduced Kerry McDevitt as the Teacher of the Year and presented her with a bouquet of flowers. He shared that she is a tremendous colleague with whom he has incredible respect.

Ms. McDevitt shared that she was humbled and honored to be recognized by her colleagues for this award. Ms. McDevitt shared postcard that she painted with inspirational quotes that she used during her Teacher of the Year speech. The painting is from the Boardwalk at the White Memorial Conservation in Litchfield.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Mr. Clay Cope requested that 9.1 Air Conditioning Project Discussion and Possible Action be moved earlier on the Agenda.

4. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA:

Mr. Hanley moved and Dr. Alexander seconded to move 9.1 Air Conditioning Project Discussion and Possible Action before the Consent Agenda, and the motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

9.1 Air Conditioning Project Discussion and Possible Action

Dr. Melendez shared that the Board agreed to use 2016-17 surplus funds to investigate the installation of an air conditioning system in the Multi Purpose Room. Mr. Iadarola, Town Engineer, put together a bid review and budget.

Mr. Iadarola shared that the school engaged with a mechanical engineer to develop specifications for the bid process. Four bids were received with the lowest bidder, M.J. Daley \$92,765.00. Mr. Iadarola has worked with M.J. Daley in the past, and the company has worked in school settings. Mr. Iadarola also did a scope review with M.J. Daley to insure they understood the entire project.

Mr. Iadarola explained the total anticipated project cost of \$126,148.00 to the Board (Enc. 9.1).

Mr. Hanley stated that the school is a Town owned building. It is the Board of Education's job to decide if the proposal should go to the Board of Selectmen, and their decision to include on the Town Hall Agenda.

The Board discussed the issue.

Mr. Hanley moved and Mr. Hackett seconded to recommend to the Board of Selectmen the Air Conditioning project in the amount of \$126,148.00 with the request that it be moved to Town Meeting with funding from the Capital Nonrecurring Fund, and the motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

5. CONSENT AGENDA:

Mr. Hanley moved and Mrs. Diotte seconded that the Board approve the consent agenda items 5.1 through 5.4, and the motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

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| 5.1 | Minutes - Regular Meeting, September 6, 2017 | Enclosure 5.1a |
| | Minutes - Policy Meeting, September 25, 2017 | Enclosure 5.1b |
| | Minutes - Maintenance Meeting, September 12, 2017 | |
| 5.2 | Personnel Actions | |
| | Jillian Murphy, Resignation Effective 6/19/2017 | |
| 5.3 | Reports – Monthly Enrollment Report | Enclosure 5.3 |
| 5.4 | Monthly Budget Report 17-18 | Enclosure 5.4 a - b |

6. APPROVAL OF CURRENT BILLS:

Mr. Hanley moved and Mrs. Diotte seconded that the Board approve the current bills as presented, and the motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

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| 6.1 | 2017-2018 Current Bills | Enclosure 6.1 |
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7. ORAL REPORTS:

7.1 SPTO Update

Mrs. Ribisl reported that as of October 11th, the SPTO had a Treasury balance of \$5,831.00. The SPTO membership drive currently has 97 families.

Requests:

\$750.00 - Native American Institute in Washington, D.C. - Grade 5
\$1000.00 - Ellis Island Field Trip - Grade 4
\$200.00 - Senior Luncheon
\$500.00 - Harlem Wizards Basketball Game

Fundraisers/Events:

Harvest Fair - October 14th
Book Fair - Current
PJs & Popcorn - October 12th
Clothing & Toy Drive - October 14th
Senior Luncheon - November 15th

Mrs. Ribisl shared that there has been discussions regarding 4th and 8th grade fundraising, and the SPTO is looking at options to make it fair for all. She shared that parents may turn to the Board of Education to support the trips.

As a Board member, Mr. Hanley shared that he feels it is important to support curriculum based field trips. He is aware of the stress associated with the cost of these trips. He is hopeful for the upcoming budget season that the Board can come to a funding resolution.

7.2 Sub-Committee

Curriculum - Mrs. Enright

Mrs. Enright did not have any Curriculum updates, but spoke positively about the new XP programs at the school.

Maintenance - Mr. Hackett

Mr. Hackett shared that the committee discussed priority issues and the budget at the last Maintenance Meeting.

Negotiation Committee - Mrs. Lenihan

Mrs. Diotte shared that Mrs. Diotte, Mrs. Seeger, Mrs. Lenihan and the school's attorney met with the Sherman Education Association. The Board is awaiting insurance information from the carrier. The next meeting is on October 25, 2017.

7.3 Chairman

No additional comments

7.4 Superintendent

Dr. Jeff Melendez - Superintendent-Principal

Vision & Goals

Dr. Melendez reiterated that the Sherman Vision is the foundation of the newly formed Goals. Dr. Melendez provided the Board with a brief status update of the goals.

Goal # 1: To develop a comprehensive, long-term, Strategic Plan

Why do we need a strategic plan? Dr. Melendez shared examples of successful companies and how education must change to align with the pace and needs of society. Dr. Melendez feels a strategic plan will help determine what support, programs, structure

and budgetary requirements need to be in place over the next five years for students' success. He has been speaking with consultants, and other districts, to help move our unique District in the right direction. Dr. Melendez is looking forward to Board and community to be part of the process.

Goal # 2: To successfully implement our 2017- 2018 program of instruction

- Special Education staff meetings are being lead to develop consistent practices and expectations in Special Education. Both Special Education and Regular Education have been meeting to discussing SRBI processes, 504 practices, etc.
- Weekly planning meetings are being held to discuss Executive Functioning and adapt SMARTS to meet the needs of our students. Dr. Melendez has heard positive feedback from students about the XP program. Throughout the year, students will be sharing their XP progress at periodic Expos.
- The school has started STAR assessments for all K-8 students, as well as Fountas and Pinnell reading assessments to inform instructional practices. Mr. Schoefer has begun merging social and emotional programs (Wingman, Color Team Captains, PBIS) to assist students understand empathy.
- Dr. Melendez shared robotic programing terminology that students will be introduced to in the newly formed TechEd program.

Goal # 3: To strengthen internal and external relationships

Dr. Melendez shared that the Administration is collaboratively working with faculty on decisions that impact their work. For example, the teachers viewed the Board goals and were asked to work in groups to determine their goals. The two goals developed to influence their work: Mindset for Learning and Communication.

Dr. Melendez also shared efforts to build internal relationships with staff members (ex. members celebrated at faculty meetings, community dinners, new Administrator Entry Plans discussions, etc.).

Goal # 4: To ensure the success of our High School students

Dr. Melendez feels it is important to understand the high school students' strengths and needs. Mrs. Snowden has been in contact with the high schools regarding SAT results, progress reports, class rank, GPA, honors received, AP courses, etc. Ms. Edwards has attended all high school PPT meetings, which informs her of student needs, as well as, builds relationships with the high schools.

The school is looking for opportunities to connect with Alumni. Dr. Melendez shared that a high school senior will be attending a meeting to share their high school experiences with the middle school students.

Goal # 5: To cultivate a mindset for learning among leadership, faculty, staff and students

Dr. Melendez shared that the Tri-State Consortium (TSC) is a membership into a group of other high performing school districts in the Tri-State area. He is currently serving as an Ex-officio member, therefore Sherman has a trial membership. Mrs. Snowden has attended a two day training session, where she learned their model and rubric. The school is also invited to a wide variety of symposiums hosted by the TSC. TSC brings high profile educators to work with specific groups. Dr. Melendez shared that he will be

coming to the Board next year to pursue membership to assist with ongoing professional development.

Goal # 6: To create a sustainable facility use plan to address current and future needs

Dr. Melendez shared that Mr. Lombardozzi is the new facility technician/supervisor. He is doing a great job working with the Board and Maintenance/Building Committees. The school may discuss the possibility of doing a facility study in the future.

Goal # 7: To develop a communication plan that meets the needs of our constituents

- Internal Communication - Dr. Melendez shared that Communication Norms was discussed at the September 29th Professional Development. The following were explored: How do we work in a committee? What if we disagree? How do we want to be treated? How do we treat others?
Communication Norms will be developed for all to abide by.
- External Communication - Dr. Melendez will be soliciting parent and community input to develop a communication plan to meet their needs.

Budget at a Glance

Dr. Melendez reviewed the Budget at a Glance with the Board. The Budget at a Glance reflects the sub titles of the five page budget document.

- In some scenarios, a positive balance reflects funds that have not been encumbered to date (i.e. since it is only October, Substitute Teachers/Paras have not been utilized in comparison to the entire year).
- The School did receive the REAP Grant of \$33,000 which helps offset the remedial support tutors.
- Fiscal Services has a balance of \$224,000 for unemployment compensation. Fortunately, almost everyone impacted by layoffs last June was able to secure employment, therefore the school did not receive expected claims.
- Audit Balance of \$11,000.00. Audit will take place later in the year.
- Operations/Maintenance has a balance of \$137,000.00 since funds have not been encumbered to date. Dr. Melendez is hopeful the newly formed position will provide savings.
- Tuition to CT School Districts has a balance of 1.6 million because the school pays tuition quarterly. The school has received one high school tuition bill.
- \$35,000.00 SPED Non-public school tuition balance. The school maintained a contingency for an outplaced student that was not needed.

Dr. Melendez does not want to give the impression that the school is under budget, since much of the surplus funds are timing issues. He feels it is beneficial to discuss/track the balances on a monthly basis.

Regarding Dr. Melendez's Goal update, Mr. Hanley would like a monthly report for the Board to track against. Major accomplishments, significant challenges, upcoming events, outstanding issues, etc.

Important Acronyms in Special Education

Ms. Edwards shared an overview of the important acronyms in Special Education. Her goal is to demystify the process so when discussing student needs and programs everyone can come to the conversation with a common foundation that can be built upon.

Ms. Edwards provided the Board with a slide of the Identification Process and noted the multiple layers. She then shared key terms used in Special Education:

- Child Find - The district's responsibility to identify children, ages 3-21 who may need special education services. Anyone can make a referral. The Planning and Placement Team (PPT) determines if the child should be evaluated, and if so, in what areas. Parents must consent to any evaluation. The referral timeline is 45 school days.
- Special Education Eligibility - Three requirements must be met in order for a child to be eligible for special education:
 - The student must be eligible under a specific category
 - Must determine if student's education is adversely impacted by disability
 - Does the student require specialized instruction in one or more areas?
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) - Federal legislation that is designed to ensure that students with disabilities (ages 3-21) are provided with a free and appropriate public education. Six main elements of the legislation are:
 - Individual Education Program (IEP)
 - Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)
 - Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
 - Evaluation
 - Parent and Teacher Participation
 - Procedural Safeguards - outlines the parents rights
- Individual Education Program (IEP) - Every student that is eligible for Special Education services has an IEP. The contents are unique to the individual's specific needs. There are features in the plan that are consistent for everyone. The document contains present levels of academic achievement, measurable goals/objective, modifications and accommodations.
- Planning and Placement Team (PPT) - A PPT meeting occurs at least annually. Many changes to the IEP cannot be made without holding a PPT meeting. The following participate at the PPT: parents, general education teacher, special education teacher, representative from the district who is aware of available resources and an individual who can interpret evaluation results.
- Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) - The school needs to provide services at public expense and under public supervision in accordance to guidelines established by the State. It is incorporated in preschool, elementary and secondary education. The student's IEP dictates the services.
- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) - Must provide services in an environment that allows the student the greatest amount of access to general education with peers as possible.
- Family Educational rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) - Confidentiality plays a significant role in Special Education. The school cannot release any information without parental consent. Under federal law, parents or students over the age of 18 have the right to see, correct and control access of the student's record.

Ms. Edwards stressed that when planning and budgeting for Special Education, no one should know the specifics of a student's program; therefore there will be instances when she must be vague for student confidentiality purposes.

Curriculum Update

Mrs. Snowden informed the Board that the school received the SBAC Math and ELA scores for grades 3 through 8, as well as the CMT Science scores for grades 5 and 8. The school is in the process of analyzing the data, along with STAR, Fountas and Pinnell, Bridges/Math and grade level assessments. Mrs. Snowden will be providing a formal presentation about the assessment results at the November Board of Education meeting.

8. NEW BUSINESS:

8.1 Discussion and Possible Approval of 2018 Regular Board Meeting Dates

Mr. Hanley moved and Dr. Alexander seconded the approval of Enclosure 8.1, Sherman Board of Education 2018 Regular Board Meeting Dates, and the motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

8.2 First Reading of Policy 5144.4 Physical Exercise and Discipline of Students

Policy 3542.22	Food Service Personnel Code of Conduct
Policy 5145.511	Sexual Abuse Prevention Education Program
Policy 6162.51	Survey of Students
Policy 5145.14	On-Campus Recruitment
Policy 5125.11	Health/Medical Records
Policy 5118.1	Homeless Students
Policy 6164.11	Drug and Alcohol Use or Possession on School Property
Policy 6164.12	Exemption from AIDS Instruction

Mrs. Seeger shared that the First Reading Policies are all mandatory policies as per the CABE audit.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Moved after Additions to the Agenda.

10. COMMUNICATION

Mr. Hanley noted that he received a thank you note.

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mariya Hurwitz, 3 Wimisink Road. Mrs. Hurwitz expressed concern regarding the accidental alarm that occurred at the school. Her child was in the hall and didn't know what to do, but ultimately found a safe place. Mrs. Hurwitz would like to know what steps the Administration has taken to revisit the procedures and policies.

Dr. Melendez shared that the school plans for emergencies, but due to unpredictable variables must make decisions on the spot that we are not prepared for. A child being left in hallway was unfortunate, but an isolated instance. The results from the accidental alarm reminded the Administration of the importance of continually having conversations of what possible variables could occur.

If a lockdown alarm goes off during a transitional time when students are in the hallway, protocol

states you scan the area, have students nearby enter class, then lock the door. Protocol states do not open the door until a first responder physically unlocks the door. If a student is in the bathroom then proceeds to class, protocol states not to open the door. Dr. Melendez noted that it is very difficult to rationalize and shared it is traumatic on both sides of the door. The Administration and staff debriefed and discussed making a judgement call even if protocol says something different.

Dr. Melendez shared that when the alarm was accidentally engaged, it took nine minutes to disengage the alarm. Steps are now in place to disengage the alarm quickly in the event of a false alarm. There were only two Administrators in the building at the time of the alarm. Once it stopped, Administration had to go to each class, unlock the door and reassure all is okay. This process took longer since only two Administrators were in the building.

After the Administration confirmed the students were emotionally in a safe place, then they reconvened to discuss what happened. The next step was to communicate to parents. Parents commented on the amount of time it took from when they received text messages from their children until the Administration sent an email. Dr. Melendez cautioned about issues that could arise from students sending text message:

- Parents could put themselves in an unsafe situation
- Traffic concerns if every parent drove to school
- Interference with law enforcement
- Text messages circumvent communication

Dr. Melendez acknowledged this is the 4th accidental alarm in a 12month period and is aware that it is unacceptable.

Mrs. Hurwitz asked if there was additional training for students. Dr. Melendez shared the best advice is for students to listen to their teacher.

Dr. Melendez shared that the Security Advisor advised that the Administration/staff must sometimes make an assessment as every situation is different. Dr. Melendez feels the school will be more prepared for future drills as much was learned from the false alarm. Dr. Melendez scheduled 13 Superintendent's Coffees, and he is always available by phone or email to discuss any issues or concerns.

Mrs. Sunday Fisher, 3 Brinsmade Lane. Mrs. Fisher understands that there is a budget excess at this point. She questioned if the Board could address the Policy pertaining to field trips to supplement, if not fully fund the Fourth Grade Field Trip to Washington, D.C. for this year? She also questions what Enrichment is provided to students not attending the trip?

Mr. Hanley shared that the Board can discuss if they would like this issue added to an upcoming Agenda. Also, they can discuss if they feel strongly about fast tracking a policy to address funding of field trips.

Dr. Melendez added that he does not want anyone to be under the impression that the school has a budget surplus as it is only October. He shared that the Administration will discuss Enrichment for students who do not attend the trip.

Mrs. Ashleigh Blake requested all Board of Education meetings be added to the Town's Nixel

site to communicate upcoming meetings. Dr. Melendez shared that all of the Board of Education meetings are on the school website in various locations, including Year At A Glance. Dr. Melendez is more than happy to help anyone navigate the website. He also welcomes feedback for different locations on the website.

Mrs. Fisher commented positively on the last two Board of Education meetings. She suggested that Dr. Melendez share highlights, perhaps a one page handout, at future Superintendent's Coffees and SPTO Meetings.

12. BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMENTS

Mrs. Seeger shared that a policy was approved last June which pertains to students who do not attend field trips. She shared that all policies can be accessed on the school's website, under Board of Education. Any topic can easily be searched on the site to view all applicable Board approved policies.

13. FUTURE MEETINGS AND TOPICS

13.1 Regular Meeting, Monday, November 6, 2017 at 7:00 PM - MPR

13.2 Policy Meeting, Monday, October 23, 2017 at 5:00 PM - LMC

14. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Hanley moved and Mrs. Diotte seconded that the Board adjourn the meeting at 9:14 PM and the motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Kasey Diotte
Vice Chair, Sherman Board of Education

Prepared by Recording Secretary: Nancy Winkler