

SHERMAN BOARD OF EDUCATION
SHERMAN, CONNECTICUT 06784
REGULAR MEETING, JANUARY 2, 2019
THE SHERMAN SCHOOL - MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM
7:00 PM

A regular meeting of the Sherman Board of Education was called to order by Mrs. Diotte at 7:06 PM in the Library Media Center on January 2, 2019.

1. PRESENT:

For the Board:	Mrs. Diotte, Mrs. Enright, Mr. Laughlin, Mrs. Lenihan, Mr. Neunzig and Mrs. Seeger
Absent:	Dr. Alexander
For the Administration:	Dr. Melendez, Ms. Edwards, Mr. Schoefer and Mrs. Snowden
School Staff:	Mrs. Loira-Marrero and Mrs. Lynch
Residents:	5 Residents and 4 Students

The Board and attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mr. Neunzig seconded to move item 8.3 Presentation by Capstone Student Award Winners to the top of the Agenda, and the motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

8.3 Presentation by Capstone Student Award Winners

Dr. Melendez shared Capstone is a component of our XP program which allows eighth-grade students to self-select an area of interest, with the guidance of a faculty member(s). Students are responsible for selecting their project, research and XP Expo presentation. This year, the teachers created the Capstone Award of Excellence to recognize students for completing an outstanding project. The Capstone Award of Excellence winners are Wayne Frick and Elanora Pease.

Wayne Frick presented his three-dimensional scale model of a 3,000 sq. ft. home. The model represented the HVAC system from the basement to the attic. Wayne explained the mathematical calculations involved, as well as how the system operated. Wayne plans on attending Henry Abbott Tech and has an interest in HVAC design and construction.

Ela Pease provided a slide presentation of her Capstone Project, Color Blind. Ela designed an experimental project where she took photographs of people in both color, and black and white. Using the photos, Ela designed two unbiased photographic surveys. Ela explained the entire process of taking and editing pictures, creating and administering survey questions and analyzing the data.

Dr. Melendez and the Board congratulated both students for their successful projects.

2. CELEBRATIONS:

None at this time.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None at this time.

4. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA:

None at this time.

5. CONSENT AGENDA:

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mrs. Lenihan seconded that the Board approve the consent agenda items 5.1 to 5.5 and the motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

- 5.1 Minutes - Regular Meeting, December 4, 2018 (Enclosure 5.1a)
- Minutes - Policy Meeting, December 3, 2018 (Enclosure 5.1b)
- Minutes - Special Meeting, December 3, 2018 (Enclosure 5.1c)
- Minutes - Maintenance Meeting, December 13, 2018 (Enclosure 5.1e)
- Minutes - Special Meeting, December 17, 2018 (Enclosure 5.1f)
- 5.2 Personnel Actions
- Appointment**
- Cody Scott, Tutor, Effective January 2, 2019
- Louise Hofsdal, Paraprofessional, Effective January 2, 2019
- 5.3 Reports - Monthly Enrollment (Enclosure 5.3)
- 5.4 Monthly Budget Report 18-19 (Prior to Transfers) (Enclosure 5.4a)
- 5.5 Monthly Budget Report 18-19 (After Transfers) (Enclosure 5.5a - 5.5b)

6. APPROVAL OF CURRENT BILLS:

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

- 6.1 2018-2019 Current Bills Enclosure 6.1

7. ORAL REPORTS:

7.1 SPTO Update

No report

7.2 Sub-Committee

Budget - Mrs. Diotte

Mrs. Diotte reported the first Budget Workshop was held on December 17th and commented the approach was different than in years past. The process began with the Administration presenting twenty-two items (test score data collection, Adobe Creative Suite, upgrade of PowerSchool & E-Finance, Social Studies Resources, Universal Pre-K, SEL Curriculum, etc.) to the Board. The ideas were discussed and feedback was provided. The Board also shared ideas. After the Board reviews specific components of the budget, the Administrative team will be invited back to discuss areas of interest. Overall, Mrs. Diotte felt it was an informative conversation and noted the next workshop is scheduled for January 14th.

Mrs. Diotte requested an update from Mrs. Loira-Marrero, Director of Finance & Operations, regarding the Budget Transfers (Enclosure 5.4a). Mrs. Loira-Marrero shared the transfers are complete and explained time was required to audit all of the accounts, which included a line by line review. She had to ensure that every purchase made was classified correctly and made all necessary corrections. Mrs. Diotte appreciates the time put forth by Mrs. Loira-Marrero.

Curriculum Committee - Mrs. Enright

Mrs. Enright provided an update from the Curriculum Meeting, January 2, 2019. The focus of the meeting was to discuss low SBAC scores and what the school is doing to address the scores. Mrs. Enright referenced the Strategic Plan Goal, to create a curriculum that is responsive, relevant and rigorous. In an effort to measure this goal, Mrs. Enright would like the District to put an actual percentage on improving the scores.

Mrs. Enright is aware that the staff cannot be evaluated on improving the SBAC scores, but feels it should be a Board Goal. The school can take action step towards the goal by utilizing various assessments (STAR, Fountas & Pinnell, Bridges Assessments) to reach the standards. She feels assigning a goal number will help structure the data collection process. If a student(s) does not meet the goal, action steps should be taken to correct, as well as examine if it's an individual, cohort, or a curriculum issue.

Mrs. Diotte noted that if the committee would like to adopt a new goal with a number measurement, then a full Board discussion is required, and cannot be decided by a committee.

Mrs. Enright shared that the committee does not plan to adopt a new goal, but put clarification on an existing one.

Mrs. Diotte noted the topic will be put on February's Agenda.

Negotiations - Mrs. Lenihan

Mrs. Lenihan shared an agreement has been reached with the Teachers and the contract has been signed.

7.3 Chairperson

Mrs. Diotte officially welcome Mr. Tim Laughlin to his first Board of Education meeting.

7.4 Superintendent Update - Dr. Jeff Melendez

No updates

8. PRESENTATIONS

8.1 Presentation of Master Plan by Friar Architects

Mr. Glenn Yeakel from Friar Architects presented the Master Plan. The objectives of the Master Plan:

- Evaluating current conditions of the building
- Defining improvements to school programs
- Identifying potential efficiency
- Creating a building safe, modern and compliant to codes
- Information used to prioritize projects based upon need, ease of construction and cost effectiveness.

The areas of the study encompassed the entire interior/exterior building, codes (building, fire and ADA), campus (parking, playgrounds, etc.) and systems (mechanical, electrical, and plumbing). Education enhancements, which deal with program spaces were suggested in the plan as well.

The building was rated in the study. Overall, the school received a Fair rating.

Mrs. Diotte asked for clarification on the ratings below “two” and questioned if it was based on the exterior. Mr. Yeakel clarified, it was an exterior rating, which was mainly based on the Playscapes, accessibility issues, curbing, drainage, etc.

Friar Architects addressed the top 4 survey issues in the report to the Board. Well Water

- K-Wing
- Roof
- Mechanical Equipment Improvement and Replacement

The Study includes Cost Estimates/Budget by Category, as well as scope of work priority and Grant information. Mr. Yeakel shared the next step for the Board is to review, challenge and accept the facility study.

Mrs. Diotte requested Mr. Yeakel speak about the recommendation to have one playground, instead of two. Mr. Yeakel shared that the recommendation is based on the presumption that something will be done with the current K-Wing. Regardless if the building is taken down, or renovated, the new playground would be affected by either new construction, or demolition. Mr. Yeakel noted moving the playground to the lower level is a big safe area.

Please visit the school’s website to view the complete Master Plan.

Maintenance Update - Mrs. Diotte

Mrs. Diotte shared an update from the last Maintenance Committee Meeting held on December 13th. The Maintenance committee surveyed the Playground Committee requesting input and feedback. The Maintenance Committee reviewed and discussed the playground survey responses. The committee also discussed how potential renovations would impact the plans for the playground and reviewed data from the Master Plan. The Maintenance Committee has decided to pause playground discussions as a Maintenance Committee. Mrs. Diotte is fully aware that something has to be done with the playground, but noted it should be a full Board discussion as it fits into the construct of the facility plan.

Mrs. Diotte shared the committee also focused on the Facility Study and discussed the study in phases.

Dr. Melendez presented a flowchart to the Board. Dr. Melendez noted the Master Plan identified a number of areas that need to be addressed (i.e. K-Wing, Water Issue, Roof). The committee is aware that input will be needed from a variety of constituents, from the Board to the students, as well as community members. Dr. Melendez referenced the soon to be finalized Strategic Plan and shared that he has recommended to the Board

the need for an Educational Consultant. The consultant will help facilitate structural enhancements and the impact on instruction in the best way to serve the students and realize our vision. Requests for capital projects would be submitted after that point to the Board of Education and Town.

Dr. Melendez touched on Mr. Yeakel's comments regarding conversations with State Legislature. Under new Grant Laws, Dr. Melendez is aware that conversations with the state should be started prior to contemplating any project in an effort to maximize funding opportunities that are available through grants.

Dr. Melendez also noted that there are number of items in the Master Plan that Mr. Lombardozzi and his team can do that will provide significant cost savings. The Maintenance Committee will determine what short-term projects from the study can be started and paid for through the operating budget.

Mrs. Diotte added that Maintenance Committee does not want to tackle short-term projects using the current operating budget that could potentially be replaced and/or improved. The guidelines they will follow is address all health and safety issues that require attention. If an area has the potential to be replaced or improved, then wait if possible.

Mr. Laughlin agreed, if it is a Health and Safety concern, it should be addressed. He also agreed with Mrs. Diotte regarding having a broader conversation with the full Board about the entirety of the study and to collectively think about the facility in general before making any decisions.

Mrs. Diotte shared there are educational changes and enhancements in the building study, but noted, they are just suggestions on how a space may be improved, not actual plans.

Mr. Neunzig questioned if a discussion on the playground would be addressed at the February meeting, and the Board agreed.

8.2 Monthly Update on Strategic Planning and Communication Plans

Dr. Melendez shared the goal teams are continuing to meet and progress has been made regarding the action steps at the faculty meetings. The Administrators have provided feedback to each team, and the action steps will be further refined. Dr. Melendez is hopeful the action steps will be presented at the March Board meeting.

Dr. Melendez provided highlights on Strategic Plan progress:

Instructional Core

Goal #4: We will develop a growth mindset among staff and students

Progress: Teacher attendance at Growth Mindset specific workshops.

Student Enrichment

Goal #5: We will provide academic and non-academic enrichment opportunities

Progress: Student participation at Western Regional music competition. This is a non-academic enrichment opportunity.

Parent Engagement

Goal #8: We will provide learning opportunities for families to support their children in school

Progress: In the process of educating families regarding how they can support their children in school by sending home STAR reports to families. The Administration is hopeful this will generate more conversations between parents and teachers regarding student progress.

Culture

Goal #13: We will engage members of the Sherman community to contribute to our school district and its future

Progress: Sherman Alumni presented high school student perspectives on transition to the Middle School students.

Communication Plan

Dr. Melendez presented an update on the Communication Plan. The first E-Newsletter was distributed on January 2, 2019. Dr. Melendez noted there are a few issues that are currently being corrected. He gave much credit to the Communication Committee on their efforts and insight. The Newsletter will be sent every Wednesday at 3:00 PM.

Mrs. Enright commented very positively regarding the Newsletter.

9. NEW BUSINESS

9.1 Discussion Regarding Policy 5118 Nonresident Students

Dr. Melendez referenced a Policy comment from the June 20, 2018 Board of Education Meeting regarding the Policy 5118 lacking information regarding non-resident staff members children attending the Sherman School District. There is a precedent set with regard to staff members children attending the school and recent communication regarding the process. The Policy Chair has requested full Board input prior to any policy changes.

Dr. Melendez shared currently staff pays approximately 50% of the standard tuition rate that is paid to area high schools. The Policy Committee recommended the full Board to consider the request for not charging tuition to staff members, and if tuition would be charged, at what rate?

Mrs. Seeger added there is not adequate wording in the policy and no procedure in place and feels the Board must decide how to move forward. She further mentioned the policy does not mention grade levels, and questioned if the student is considered a high school Sherman student.

Dr. Melendez will review the contract, but believes tuition would apply only from Preschool through eighth grade.

The Board discussed this issue at length, including if the policy includes both staff and teachers, as well as out of district students and the application process. Mrs. Seeger noted the Policy must state at the discretion of Superintendent, not Board of Education. Also, she noted the tuition element is missing.

The Board also discussed class dynamics, but Mrs. Diotte pointed out that this issue cannot be avoided as a teacher can live in Sherman and have their children attend the school. She questioned if we are looking to refine the policy to include more articulate guidelines around tuition costs?

Mrs. Seeger shared the Board must determine what the tuition costs should be for teachers (full tuition, half, free, etc.).

Mrs. Diotte suggested more guidelines be put around how the tuition cost is determined. She noted an actual number should not be included in the Policy, because it would have to be revised constantly. She suggested Dr. Melendez look at the policy and provide recommendations for any language changes, perhaps seeking guidance from CABA.

Mrs. Seeger added that K through 8 language should be included. Also, the per pupil cost must be determined (i.e. cost per individual student, family cost etc.). Mrs. Seeger does not feel this is a committee decision. Mrs. Diotte agreed, but feels details can be worked out by the committee, and then recommendation be made to the full Board. Mrs. Seeger would like the First Reading to be discussed by the Board.

Dr. Melendez added there is a formal request from a staff member to consider tuition at zero costs, and he would like to provide a response. The Board felt the issue was discussed and agrees with the current practices in place. Dr. Melendez did not recall a definite stance on the subject.

Dr. Melendez will provide recommendations regarding fixed costs at the next Policy Committee Meeting. The committee could potentially amend the policy and the Board will discuss through readings.

Mr. Neunzig added that he is unsure why the tuition cost would remain fixed.

9.2 Discussion Regarding 6145 Extracurricular

Dr. Melendez shared Policy 6145 Extracurricular Activities was discussed at the June 11th Policy meeting. The committee reviewed the policy to understand and clarify the responsibility of the District with regard to extracurricular activities and noted the policy lacks guidelines as to how these activities are authorized, funded, etc. The Policy Committee recommended this Policy be discussed at a regular Board of Education meeting for full Board input.

Dr. Melendez referenced the Odyssey program. He acknowledged the program adds value to the students, but noted it is not a "school sponsored program" since it is not staffed by the school. The Board has funded the membership and World Championship travel expenses in the past. He shared last year the school did fund a staff run Spontaneous After School program that was open to all students. Dr. Melendez feels the policy must be broad enough to speak to all extracurricular programs. Dr. Melendez also mentioned that the Strategic Plan calls for additional extracurricular activities.

Mrs. Seeger noted language in the policy has to change regarding what constitutes a school sponsored program. She questioned if the Sherman Board of Education will support Odyssey of the Mind. If there are plans for it to be included as an extracurricular, then it must be planned for.

Mr. Neunzig reflected on a past discussion regarding reimbursing travel expenses only benefited a few students on the backend going to the Worlds Competition, instead of funding the front end which could benefit more students.

Mrs. Enright weighed in and questioned what extracurricular will look like? She feels the Administration should put together a list of extracurricular options that hits all aptitudes.

Mrs. Seeger questioned Dr. Melendez regarding the Administration's plans for extracurricular activities. Dr. Melendez shared that it has not been determined yet. Mrs. Diotte added that it will be visited during the Budget process.

The Board discussed the history of Odyssey of the Mind that has taken place over the past several years, and shared their personal viewpoints.

Dr. Melendez recapped that the Administration should be making programming decisions around a wide variety of clubs. If the school decided to go with Odyssey, then the model would have to change to be run by our staff.

Mrs. Diotte suggested Dr. Melendez and his Administration Team brainstorm ideas and the Board will discuss during the appropriate part of the budget process. She suggested fellow Board members think about what type of enrichment the students should be exposed to.

The Board discussed why there are no Odyssey teams this year and then reflected on past history of the program.

9.3 Review and Discussion of Sub-Committee Assignments and Possible Action to Approve Nominations

The Board discussed Committee assignments. Mrs. Diotte requested fellow Board members let her know if they would like to be removed from a committee. She is aware of level of commitment and would like a balance.

Kasey Diotte:	Board of Education Chair and Budget Committee
James Neunzig:	Board of Education Vice Chair, Budget Chair and Maintenance
Susan Seeger:	Policy Chair, Budget and Negotiations Committee
Themi:	Curriculum Chair, Budget and Communication Committee
Dr. Alexander:	Communication Chair and Budget Committee
Dorinda:	Negotiations Chair, Budget, Curriculum and Policy Committee
Tim Laughlin:	Maintenance Chair and Budget Committee

Mrs. Diotte shared that members should discuss details in committee, and then go to monthly Board meetings and have full conversation based on recommendations. She feels it will be helpful to have a few members aware of the topic to make the work more effective.

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

10.1 Second Reading of Policy 5144.1 Physical Restraint/Seclusion/Exclusionary Time Out (Enclosure 10.1)

Mrs. Seeger moved and Mrs. Lenihan seconded to approve Policy 5144.1 Physical Restraint/Seclusion/Exclusionary Time Out, and the motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

11. COMMUNICATION

No additional communication

12. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comment

13. BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMENTS

Mr. Neunzig would like a brief update at the Board of Education meeting regarding continuing education.

14. FUTURE MEETINGS AND TOPICS

- 14.1 Board of Education Meeting - February 6, 2019 at 7:00 PM - Library Media Center
- 14.2 Budget Workshop - January 14, 2019 at 6:00 PM - Library Media Center
- 14.3 Policy Committee Meeting - January 14, 2019 at 5:00 PM - Library Media Center
- 14.4 Board of Education Retreat - February 9, 2019 at 9:00 AM - Location TBD

15. ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mrs. Lenihan seconded that the Board adjourned at 9:30 PM, and the motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,

James Neunzig
Vice Chair, Sherman Board of Education

Prepared by Recording Secretary: Nancy Winkler