

SHERMAN BOARD OF EDUCATION
SHERMAN, CONNECTICUT 06784
REGULAR MEETING, MAY 1, 2019
THE SHERMAN SCHOOL - LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER
7:00 PM

A regular meeting of the Sherman Board of Education was called to order by Mrs. Diotte at 7:01 PM in the Library Media Center on May 1, 2019.

1. PRESENT:

For the Board:	Dr. Alexander, Mrs. Diotte, Mrs. Enright, Mr. Laughlin, Mrs. Lenihan, Mr. Neunzig and Mrs. Seeger
Administration:	Dr. Melendez, Ms. Edwards and Mrs. Snowden
School Staff:	Dr. Corso, Mr. Rowella, Mrs. Shook and Mrs. Yagid
SPTO:	Mrs. Ribisl
Residents:	8 Residents

The Board and attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. CELEBRATIONS:

2.1 Recognition of CABE Leadership Award

Dr. Melendez shared the award criteria: willingness to take on challenges, capability to make difficult decisions, concern for others, ability to work with others, willingness to commit to a project, diplomacy, ability to understand issues clearly and ability to honor a commitment. He proudly shared the award recipients: Nicole Schutz and Remy Hafer.

2.2 Superintendent's Student of the Year Award

Dr. Melendez shared the selection criteria for the Student of the Year award: community service and service to others, academic prowess; and leadership service to the school community. Dr. Melendez proudly announced the award recipients: Micayla Tarby and Annabelle McLean.

The students were personally congratulated by each Board member and applauded by all in attendance. Mrs. Diotte also congratulated the parents for the role they play in the children's success.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

No public comment.

4. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA:

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mrs. Seeger seconded to add under New Business, Discussion of Possible Addition of a Middle School Math Interventionist Position, and the motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

5. CONSENT AGENDA:

Mrs. Diotte moved and Dr. Alexander seconded the Board approve the Consent Agenda items 5.1 to 5.4 and the motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

- 5.1 Minutes - Regular Meeting, April 3, 2019
Minutes - Curriculum Committee, April 3, 2019
- 5.2 Personnel Actions
Appointment - Ken Palmer, Teacher
Appointment - Krystianna Toth, Preschool Teacher, Effective August 26, 2019
Resignation - Cecelia Loira-Marrero, Dir. of Finance/Operations, Effective April 26, 2019
- 5.3 Reports - Monthly Enrollment
- 5.4 Monthly Budget Report 18-19: Budget by Function & Summary of Funds

6. APPROVAL OF CURRENT BILLS:

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mrs. Seeger seconded that the Board approve the current bills as presented, and the motion passed unanimously, 7-0

- 6.1 2018-2019 Current Bills Enclosure 6.1

7. ORAL REPORTS:

7.1 SPTO Update

Mrs. Ribisl provided an update from the Boots & Bowties Ball that was held on April 26th. The event raised \$10,200.00. Mrs. Ribisl shared 80 guests attended the event which she described as an amazing evening. She thanked the following sponsors and donors:

- New Milford Tennis and Swim Club - two family club memberships
- Westchester Modular/Hatcher Family - one week stay in Florida villa
- Structured Home Solutions/Febbraio Family - Samsung 55' 4K Ultra HD TV with professional installation
- Corporate Construction & the Viola Family - Cigar Bar Sponsorship
- Borgatta & Piovezahn Family - Venue Sponsorship
- James Neunzig & JP Gifford - Event hors d'oeuvres

Mrs. Ribisl also recognized and thanked:

- Candlelight Farms Inn & CT Family Chiropractic for their generosity
- The Band - Potter's Field for their amazing performance
- Mr. Schoefer, Auctioneer
- Teachers & Administration for their generous donations
- The organizing committee: Kelly Parker, Dave Febbraio, Amanda O'Neill, Molly Garcia, Louise Hofsdal and their spouses.

Mrs. Ribisl noted there are SPTO nominations for various board positions and voting will take place at the next SPTO meeting.

Dr. Melendez acknowledged and thanked Mrs. Ribisl for all of her efforts.

**7.2 Sub-Committee
Budget Committee**

Mr. Neunzig reported the he, along with Dr. Melendez and Mrs. Seeger presented the Budget to the Senior Center. The vote will take place on May 4th at Mallory Town Hall.

Policy Committee

Mrs. Seeger reported the committee's last meeting was cancelled. The Policy Committee will be working on the 7100 Series after the Maintenance Committee has had a chance to review. She also shared two new policies will be reviewed and will be voted on under Unfinished Business.

Negotiations Committee

Mrs. Lenihan shared the next Para/Tutor Negotiations session will take place on Wednesday, May 8th.

Maintenance Committee

Mr. Laughlin provided an update from the April 26th Maintenance Meeting.

- Water System Update - The State of Connecticut is currently reviewing the water proposal. The State must approve prior to installation. The new system cost projection is \$41,000.00 which is less than what is currently spent on bottled water. The committee will continue to analyze locations for the water system throughout the building.
- The committee also reviewed policies and they will report back to the Policy Committee.
- The committee continued to have conversations regarding Capital Project Planning. The Maintenance Committee members requested permission from the Board to go to Hartford to have a conversation with state agencies (that would have oversight on school construction) and elected officials to discuss parameters of potential projects and potential state reimbursement.

7.3 Chairperson

No report

7.4 Superintendent Update - Dr. Jeff Melendez

Dr. Melendez provided an update from the Strategic Plan to the Board on the following action steps that are almost complete:

- 7.3 *Ensure time is utilized efficiently through an analysis and planning of the School Calendar*
Update - A revised calendar will be presented to the Board during Item 10.1.
- 7.4 *Adhere to our adopted District Communication Plan with fidelity*
Update - Teachers will be finalizing newsletter contributions during a staff meeting the week of May 7th.
- 8.1 *Communicate the purpose and results of our state and district assessments to all families in a clear and comprehensive way*
Update - Dr. Melendez recently hosted coffee discussion, a number of newsletters, as well as letters defining steps taken thus far to remediate scores and increase performance have been distributed. Also, assessment data has been shared with individual families.
- 11.7 *Obtain consultant services to support the improvements of school climate and culture*
Update - Dr. Melendez noted the worked discussed last week with the hiring of Patrick Flynn to assist with culture and climate. The Action Step was discussed to initiate plan, but other actions steps and beyond to follow through with improving school climate and culture.

Dr. Melendez also provided an update on Patrick Flynn and his time spent at the school during his 2 and half days here:

- Met with Administration, SEA and the Communication Norms Committee
- Customized a Steering Committee designed for the Sherman School
- Met with the full staff presenting on the topic of what defines climate and culture
- Completed 29 classroom observations, observed 4 meetings, and held one on one and small group discussions throughout the building
- Met collectively and separately with the SEA and Dr. Melendez
- Provided a list of initial recommendations to improve the timeline for work

Mr. Flynn expects to provide a climate and culture report of the school by May 10th. This report will serve as a basis for work needed moving forward.

Mrs. Diotte questioned what the report would include. Dr. Melendez has not seen the template but believes it will be a comprehensive report of the current culture and next steps.

Mrs. Enright questioned if he communicated with parents or Board members. Dr. Melendez shared that he did not since the focus was on the climate of the school and employees, but any Board member or staff can contact Mr. Flynn directly.

Mr. Laughlin questioned if Mr. Flynn will report back to the Board after he completed the May 10th report. Mr. Laughlin feels it would be helpful to discuss findings and potential improvements. Dr. Melendez shared that he will be back at the September Board meeting to present.

Dr. Melendez further shared that a MOU (Memo of Understanding) is currently being worked on with the Union and will be presented to the Board at the June Board of Education meeting. The purpose of the MOU is to provide a stipend to teachers for participating on the steering committee. The additional training will provide staff and administration with the tools required to follow through on the plan.

8. PRESENTATIONS

No Presentations

9. NEW BUSINESS

9.1 Discussion of Possible Addition of a Middle School Math Interventionist Position

Dr. Melendez reviewed with the Board multiple strategies that have been put in place this school year to improve student performance:

- Formed a Math Committee of teachers and administrators to align instructional strategies and identify areas of need
- Facilitated full-day administrative meetings with teachers to analyze student performance data
- Provided two full-days of teacher PD on designing instructional unit plans
- Hired a part-time middle school math tutor to provide increased academic support
- Set goals with individual students regarding test performance including test-taking strategies

- Provided students with more practice opportunities with SBAC-type questions using interim assessments and complex math problem-solving
- Modified the testing schedule to minimize disruptions and assigned personnel to assist with troubleshooting
- Increased coaching opportunities to model lessons for teachers in language arts
- Provided professional development for administrators to improve supervision in math
- Increased communication with families regarding student performance
- Offered “Superintendent’s Coffees” to discuss assessments with families
- Piloted a math intervention program in the middle school to consider for future purchase

He also provided plans for the upcoming school year, which included a budgeted position for a math tutor. Dr. Melendez recommended to the Board a new Math Interventionist position, rather than the budgeted tutor position. He shared the benefits of a Math Interventionist: Full Time, Certified Math Teacher, Self-Directed, Member of the SRBI Team, Math Committee Member, Liaison to Elementary Math, Assist in Assessing Effectiveness of the Math Program. Dr. Melendez also presented a slide which illustrated no impact to the budget.

The Board questioned the new role at length. They shared questions, concerns and comments regarding:

- What the role would entail? How would the role function daily? What is the job description?
- Does this position have the autonomy to intervene in all aspects of math curriculum, student engagement and performance?
- Concerns regarding head count to student population. Would the role have a level of autonomy to insure outcomes are tangible?
- Would position have the ability to evaluate different student variables?
- Understand the position is bigger than math scores with the intent to improve the entire math program.

Dr. Melendez shared there is no certificate for a Math Interventionist. The position would fall under the direction of Mrs. Snowden. The intent of the position is to bring broader insight and experiences to math instruction, but not to train other teachers in methodologies, or evaluate teachers (it is not a coaching position).

Dr. Alexander noted that there have been many conversations regarding math and feels the additional position would be a positive step to address concerns. She shared that she supports the position but would like the Board to receive a report at the end of the next year clearly defining the outcomes of the position.

Dr. Melendez agreed and noted the position will be evaluated annually regarding the efficacy of the Interventionist position.

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

10.1 Discussion and Possible Approval of the 2019-2020 School Calendar (Enc. 9.1)

Dr. Melendez presented the revised 2019-20 School Calendar to the Board and noted the improvements made.

Mrs. Diotte shared that she does support the work that needs to be done but has concerns overall with the number of half days. She noted this issue has been a concern of the Board for the past several years.

The Board questioned what Strategic Plan days for the staff would look like. Both Dr. Melendez and Mrs. Snowden provided a few potential scenarios of Strategic Planning days.

The Board also questioned the class schedule for early dismissal. Mrs. Snowden confirmed the students scheduled classes are shorten, and lunch and recess is eliminated.

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mrs. Lenihan seconded the approval of the 2019-20 School Calendar as proposed, and the motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

10.2 Discussion of Possible Change in Practice of Including Enclosures with Agenda

Dr. Melendez shared the revised procedures that were discussed at the April Board meeting regarding Consent Agenda and Enclosures.

Mr. Laughlin would like the procedures to indicate that the posting timeframe does not include weekends and holidays.

Mrs. Seeger would like the procedure document to reflect that the minutes pertain to the monthly Board of Education minutes, not the sub-committee minutes. Also, the wording should be clarified: No consent agenda enclosures will be included, but all of the enclosures will be included.

10.3 Second Reading Policy 7115 Developing Educational Specifications (Enc. 9.3)

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mrs. Seeger seconded to adopt Policy 7115 Developing Educational Specifications, and the motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

10.4 Second Reading Policy 7211 Architect Selection (Enc. 9.4)

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mrs. Seeger seconded to adopt Policy 7211 Architect Selection, and the motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

10.5 Update Regarding Design and Innovation Committee

Dr. Melendez shared the Design and Innovation committee is comprised of 26 members, plus the facilitator Heidi Hayes Jacobs. He feels the committee represents a wide cross section of the community. Dr. Melendez sent individual letters to each committee member and they will all receive a copy of Bold Moves, by Heidi Hayes Jacobs.

Dr. Melendez also outlined the Agenda for the meeting.

11. COMMUNICATION

Mrs. Diotte shared the Board received two emails from Susan Zeitler regarding technology in the building and concerns regarding communication directly as a member of the community with the Board of Education clerk.

12. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mrs. Zeitler expressed concern regarding restrictions that have been placed on her from entering the building without making an appointment. She explained two instances where she entered the building without permission while school was in session, which prompted a meeting with the Superintendent and State Trooper. Mrs. Zeitler shared the outcome of the meeting with the Board and she does not feel she is a security risk and requested it be removed.

Mrs. Zeitler took over four and half minutes of public comment time to share her situation. Mrs. Diotte stopped Mrs. Zeitler from continuing. She noted she surpassed the three-minute time limited and had to remind Mrs. Zeitler that she was sharing this information during a public comment segment at a Board of Education meeting.

13. BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMENTS

Mrs. Diotte shared the fourth-grade class left for the seminal D.C. trip this morning and she wished them all well. She noted the Board of Education funded the student portion of trip for the second year in a row. Mrs. Diotte shared the decision was intentional as it is a learning opportunity and curricular driven trip.

Mr. Neunzig agreed with Mrs. Diotte. He is aware that financing and fundraising was a burden for many families. He feels is it a responsible use of funds.

14. FUTURE MEETINGS AND TOPICS

- 14.1 Board of Education Meeting - June 5, 2019 at 7:00 PM - Library Media Center
- 14.2 Design and Innovation Committee - May 9, 2019 - Library Media Center
- 14.3 Design and Innovation Committee - May 22, 209 - Library Media Center
- 14.2 Policy Meeting - TBD
- 14.3 Curriculum Committee - TBD
- 14.4 Maintenance Committee - TBD

15. ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mrs. Seeger seconded that the Board adjourn at 8:23 PM and the motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

Respectfully submitted,

James Neunzig
Vice Chair, Sherman Board of Education

Prepared by Recording Secretary: Nancy Winkler