

EASTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
January 12, 2010
Minutes

Filed subject to approval.

Present: Cohen, Dunsby, Maiorano (8:53pm), Treidel, Underberger (by telephone)
Administration: Cicchetti, Mas, Sullivan, Fox-Santora, Parker, Kaplan, Dekle
Others: eight people in the audience

Mr. Treidel called the meeting to order at 7:43 pm. He introduced and welcomed new Superintendent Dr. Michael Cicchetti.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: move to approve the minutes of the December 8, 2009 meeting as submitted. Dunsby, Cohen. Approved. Unanimous.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Dr. Dunsby commented that he was the only Easton board member in attendance at the Joint Board of Education meeting held last week to consider participation in the grant program, Race to the Top. He suggested that, in the future, the board members be polled to determine who would be attending the meetings.

PRESENTATION OF PRELIMINARY ESTIMATE OF 2010-2011 EXPENDITURES

The administration recapped the progress made in the 2009-2010 school year. The presentation reviewed the budget priorities for 2010-2011: maintenance of current programs and services, reinstatement of select items lost in the current year, additional paraprofessional support for Mathematics at SSES, implementation of Powerschool, and update of Strategic Plan.

The foundation budget, the budget needed to maintain current programs and services includes:

- One additional 0.5 teacher, Social Studies changing from 0.5 to a 1.0 FTE
- Reduction of one section in grade 2
- Computer replacement at SSES, final phase
- Reinstatement of summer curriculum hours
- Reinstatement of professional development, conferences and travel
- Reinstatement of extracurricular activities at HKMS
- Reduction of HKMS Math Specialist by 0.4 FTE

The improvements included in the presentation:

- Math assistant at SSES
- Increased hours for media assistant at HKMS
- Increased services for special education students
- Capital improvements, HKMS, replacement of gutters, some cafeteria chairs and bleachers in gym, and painting of some halls/classrooms

The only new program included in the presentation was an allocation for the update of the Strategic Plan.

The starting point for budget discussion is an increase of 5.67%. The board will meet on Thursday, January 14, 2010, to discuss the budget in detail. Board members requested information on items/programs that were considered but not included and the number of staff member children currently enrolled in the schools. The administration was asked to prepare a clustered listing of reductions for consideration.

AGENDA ADDITION

Motion: move to add to the agenda a discussion and action on the Connecticut State Department of Education's Race to the Top Grant. Dunsby, Cohen. Approved. Unanimous.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION: CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S RACE TO THE TOP GRANT (RTTT)

Dr. Cicchetti provided an overview of the RTTT Grant. The Redding and Region #9 Boards of Education declined to participate in the RTTT grant at this time. The benefit to Easton would be approximately \$3,300/year for four years. There is a concern about the benefit to the district and the requirements for implementation of specific programs. The cost of implementation of programs could outweigh the financial gain. Dr. Cicchetti indicated there would be another grant opportunity in the Spring.

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education decline participation in the RTTT grant at this time. Dunsby, Cohen. Approved. Unanimous.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction: Mrs. Mas reported the Easton and Redding reading and writing specialists met to review midyear assessments. District midyear assessments will be administered during the month of January in reading comprehension, mathematics, and writing prompts. The ER9 Wellness Advisory Committee met to review the Chartwells Nutrition Grant, \$2,000/year for five years. The Committee elected to give the first \$2,000 grant to SSES to promote the school garden and the use of homegrown products in the cafeteria. The Easton BOE Curriculum Committee hosted a curriculum conversation prior to this meeting. They discussed online assessment programs currently being used in both schools.

Director Of Finance & Operations: Mrs. Sullivan reported on the following:

1. Health Insurance, the claims and administrative costs are averaging \$134,000, below the monthly contributions.
2. Year-to-date financials are now posted on the website for review. Areas of concern are unanticipated unemployment compensations costs and repair costs for the HVAC system at Samuel Staples Elementary School.
3. Mrs. Sullivan provided comparative information on the per pupil cost and additional comparison data for review.
4. A letter from the Easton Board of Finance was received indicating the Board was requesting town budgets aim to a zero percent increase in next year's budget. The Board of Education has been invited to attend the Board of Finance meeting on March 10, 2010 at 7 pm.

Special Services: Dr. Dekle provided a written report and added that staff are preparing for CMT testing, including changes in the modification requirements.

Samuel Staples Elementary School: Mrs. Fox Santora reported the students conducted a toy and warm winter jacket drive that was very successful. In addition, two fifth graders conducted a fund raising effort to collect funds to provide personal care products for those in temporary housing. The school was asked to apply for a HOTS Leadership Grant for up to \$2,000. The grant will promote the training of other schools in the HOTS program.

Helen Keller Middle School: Mrs. Parker reported students participated in the Geography Bee, and in a variety of community service projects. The Teacher Book Club, reading “Do I Really Have to Teach Reading” completed the first round and will continue to meet to model strategies discussed in the book. Scheduled “lockdowns” were practiced in both schools and everything ran smoothly.

Superintendent: Dr. Cicchetti commented on his welcome to the District, his visitation of each school on his first day and his plans to meet with community representatives, the administration, staff, and parent groups.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: move to adjourn the meeting. Katz, Cohen. Approved. Unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Adam Dunsby, Acting Board Secretary

Recorded by Mary Maday