

EASTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
February 9, 2010
Minutes

Present: Bobroske, Dunsby, Maiorano (7:40), Treidel, Underberger
Administration: Cicchetti, Mas, Sullivan, Fox-Santora, Parker, Kaplan
Others: 15 people in the audience

Mr. Treidel called the meeting to order at 7:34 pm.

ELECTION OF NEW BOARD MEMBER

Mr. Treidel received a letter from the Easton Democratic Town Committee a recommendation of Dr. Vida Peskay as a new board member to fill the unexpired term of Dr. Elin Cohen.

Motion: move that Vida Peskay be elected to the Easton Board of Education. Underberger, Bobroske. Approved. Unanimous.

Dr. Peskay was sworn in by the Easton Town Clerk and was seated at the board table.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: move that the minutes of the January 12, 2010 meeting be accepted as submitted. Underberger, Dunsby. Approved. 4-0-1. Peskay abstained.

Motion: move that the minutes of the January 14, 2010 meeting be accepted as submitted. Dunsby, Underberger. Approved. 4-0-1. Peskay abstained.

Motion: move that the minutes of the Tri-Board meeting of January 26 be accepted as submitted. Dunsby, Maiorano. Approved. 3-0-2. Peskay & Underberger abstained.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ann Mansky, Morning Glory Drive: Reiterated her comments of the last meeting, that the Joel Barlow High School is an accredited school, but the elementary and middle schools in Easton are not accredited.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Treidel read a tribute written by a former student of Helen Keller Middle School, Andy Young, to a recently deceased former student at Helen Keller Middle School, Dr. Andrew Lange. Mr. Treidel added that he was privileged to have both Andy Lange and Andy Young in his class from 1969-70.

DISCUSSION OF 2010-2011 PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET

Dr. Cicchetti presented the administration's list of possible reductions, as requested by the Board, from 5.67%, down to 0.0%. The reductions were listed in clusters and by school. Mrs. Sullivan reviewed the list:

Tier 1

- Reduction in electricity and telecommunications costs, technical edits

- Increase in Central Office budget reflecting the recently approved budget
- Tuition reimbursement, reduction to reflect what is planned by staff at this point
- Non-certified substitute account reduction
- Professional development, reduction in conferences
- Capital item, HKMS bleachers removal eliminated, Park and Recreation has offered to take care of this item
- Reduction of instructional supplies & periodicals at HKMS & SSES
- Reductions in cleaning supplies & maintenance
- Addition of 6th grade Science textbooks ~ \$10,0000
- Defer interior painting and window washing at SSES ~ \$19,000
- Reduction of non-certified staff hours
- Defer replacement of 5 year old computers at SSES for 3rd, 4th & 5th grades
- Special Education, additional cost for student outplacement

These reductions bring the budget increase down to 5.12%.

Mr. Maiorano expressed concern for the reduction of instructional supplies. Mrs. Parker noted that the average of \$450 per teacher will be the lowest budgeted amount in 10 years. This might increase teacher's personal out of pocket expenses to \$1000. Mr. Maiorano requested information on categories and costs for the supplies for classroom use that are being provided by the individual teachers. Mrs. Fox Santora noted that the teacher's desktop computer needs to be up to date in order to keep up with the Smart Board technology. The possibility of trading some of the newer computers from the lower grades with the upper grade teachers was discussed.

Tier 2

- Further reductions in professional development
- Elimination of extracurricular activities at both schools
- Further reductions for Special Education in instructional supplies, standardized testing & equipment

These reductions bring the increase down to 4.59%.

Tier 3

- Reduction of non-certified staff hours at HKMS
- Elimination of Capital Items at HKMS (gutter cleaning & gym floor refurbishing)
- Elimination of some standardized testing at SSES (NWA online testing)
- Reduction in outside Special Ed professional support services

These reductions bring the increase down to 3.99%

Tier 4

- Reduction of summer curriculum work at both schools
- 1 full time certified staff position at HKMS
- Reduction of one section of Grade 3
- Reduction of ELL support services for Special Education

These reductions bring the increase to 2.97%

Tier 5

- Reduction of outside services for Special Education

This brings the increase to 2.83%

Tier 6

- Further reduction of summer curriculum work
- Reduction of two non-certified staff for Special Education

These reductions bring the increase to 2.36%

Tier 7

- Reduction of 1.3 FTE at HKMS
- Elimination of request for math support at SSES

These reductions bring the increase to 1.48%

Tier 8

- Reduction in both school's administrator hours by one month in summer
- Reduction in SSES non-certified hours

These reductions bring the increase to 1.08%

Tier 9

- Further reduction of instructional supplies at HKMS
- Reduction of hours for non-certified staff hours at SSES

These reductions bring the increase to 0.65%

Tier 10

- Reduction of 1.0 FTE teacher at SSES
- Reduction in amount budgeted for Health Insurance reserve contribution

This brings the increase to ZERO %

Discussion of the various reductions followed.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

SSES: Mrs. Fox Santora highlighted various student activities, including a fundraiser for the Red Cross/Haiti Earthquake, a third grade visit to an art exhibit at the Easton Library, and potential HOTS Grant for Samuel Staples School to be the host school for a HOTS workshop.

HKMS: Mrs. Parker reported on fundraising efforts to benefit Doctors without Borders and their work in Haiti and the incorporation of Haiti & earthquakes into classroom study. The Ski Club has had a very successful season. Mrs. Parker provided an update on the work being done with ELF to bring Project Lead the Way to the school next fall. Work is also being done with the PTA to identify critical areas of awareness for parents such as relational bullying and social networking.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction: Mrs. Mas reported on the transition process for students moving from 8th grade to the high school. The Easton and Redding middle school reading and writing specialists met to discuss the mid-year reading comprehensive results in grades 5-8, test format and teacher feedback. In addition, the ER9 World Language

Curriculum Committee from both the Redding and Easton middle schools and the high school met to review the textbooks for French and Spanish. She also reported the Professional Development Day centered on curriculum development and was very productive.

Director of Finance: Mrs. Sullivan provided the monthly update on Health Insurance. Claims for December were up, but year-to-date the average of \$149,000 was less than the budgeted amount of \$156,000. The year-to-date report shows an overage in the maintenance account at SSES, primarily due to HVAC maintenance. A capital request will be made to the Town of Easton for \$110,000 for replacement of windows at HKMS. Mrs. Sullivan asked for board member representation for a committee to meet with the teachers regarding extracurricular stipends. A meeting is scheduled for March 3, 2010.

Superintendent: Dr. Cicchetti reported he has visited four of the five schools, visiting classrooms and connecting with students and staff. He is impressed with the teachers and support staff of all schools. He added that the level of parent support and participation is wonderful.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Name not clear: question regarding the hiring process for teachers. Dr. Cicchetti responded with an overview of what the district looks for during the hiring process.

Jeanne Jones, Flat Rock Rd: expressed her concern about the need to get the message about budget reductions to the members of the community. She is concerned about the level of education in Easton and the impact of reductions on students. Mr. Treidel responded that he is hoping to set up a series of small coffee discussion sessions to discuss the budget and education.

Don Cooper, Sherwood Road: expressed concerned that losing para-professionals would further increase the burden on the entire staff.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Dr. Underberger asked if the February 24, 2010 meeting could be rescheduled as he is not available. Mrs. Bobroske is also not available on that date. Dr. Cicchetti will try to reschedule the meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

**Motion: move to recess to executive session for a discussion of collective bargaining. Underberger, Bobroske. Approved. Unanimous.
Dr. Cicchetti & Mrs. Sullivan were invited to attend.**

The meeting recessed at 9:48 pm.

RECONVENE

The Chair reconvened the meeting in public session at 10:33 pm.

Motion: direct representatives of the Easton Board of Education to approach the Easton Education Association to discuss concessions. Maiorano, Dunsby. Approved. Unanimous.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: move to adjourn the meeting. Maiorano, Dunsby. Approved. Unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 10:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Underberger, Board Secretary

Recorded by Mary Maday