

EASTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
October 13, 2009
Minutes

Filed subject to approval.

Present: Allan, Katz, Maiorano, Treidel, Underberger
Administration: Fossbender, Mas, Sullivan, Santora-Fox, LaTorre, Parker, Kaplan, Dekle
Others: nine people in the audience

Dr. Katz called the meeting to order at 7:40 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: move to approve the minutes of September 16, 2009 as submitted. Allan, Treidel. Approved, 4-0-1. Mr. Maiorano abstained.

AGENDA ADDITION

Motion: move to add to the agenda a discussion of a donation of a gift that exceeds \$25.00. Treidel, Allan. Approved. Unanimous.

EDUCATION COST SHARING AND STATE FISCAL STABILIZATION FUNDS (SFSF)

The ECS Grant entitlement remains at the 2008-2009 level for the next two years (2009-2010 and 2010-2011). Approximately 14.26% supported by the Federal SFSF funds under ARRA (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009). Easton's total entitlement for 2009-2010 is \$593,868. The ARRA portion of that is approximately \$84,000.

The State funded portion of ECS will continue to be paid to the Town's treasurer in accordance with Section 10-262i of the Connecticut General Statutes.

The SFSF portion will be paid through the ED111 process and the towns are required to pass these SFSF funds directly to the board of education. Mrs. Sullivan explained the Town of Easton/Board of Education options for processing the funds. The Town of Easton could reduce the Education budget by \$84,000, reducing both the revenue and expenditures by that amount, or the Board of Education could under spend the budget by \$84,000 (returning that unspent amount to the Town). Either option could present problems (increase in budget request) in the budget year 2011-2012 when the funding is no longer available.

The Board of Education discussed the importance of memorializing the action regarding this transfer with the Board of Finance because of the impact on budget planning in the future. Mrs. Sullivan recommended the first option, requesting the Board of Finance to reduce the Board of Education budget, showing a reduction in revenue and expenditures, with the understanding that the reduction is due to the funding related to ARRA.

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education recommend to the Easton Board of Finance to reduce the Board of Education budget for fiscal 2009-2010, by the amount funded through federal ARRA monies of \$84,724, with the understanding that in two years when the funding is no longer available, there will be a corresponding increase in the Board of Education budget. Allan, Katz. Approved. 4-1. Mr. Treidel voted against the motion.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT: DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

Mrs. Sullivan reported Health Insurance claims for July and August were lower than those months last year. The expenditures, year-to-date, are tracking as expected.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS

Samuel Staples Elementary School: Mrs. Santora Fox reviewed the school's goals and how they will be addressed:

- Students will improve their reading comprehension and improve their understanding of the content and structure of writing.
- Students will improve their ability to solve complex math problems and to explain their thinking.
- Students will develop and demonstrate positive character traits as identified by school personnel.
- School personnel will make timely updates on their Web sites; communication from the SSES Main Office will take many forms and address current thinking and preferred practices across many educational areas.

Helen Keller Middle School: Mrs. Parker reviewed the school's goals and how they will be addressed:

- Students will improve their reading comprehensive, editing, and revising skills, and ability to solve complex math problems and explain their thinking.
- Establish a consistent process for meaningful review of universal and formative assessments in reading, math, and science that drive instructional improvement and student learning.
- Implement Year-One Tasks for Project Lead the Way
- Students will demonstrate strengths of character, especially the traits of integrity and civic responsibility

Special Services: Dr. Dekle reviewed the department's goals and how they will be addressed:

- Students receiving special education services will meet or exceed the objectives identified in their Individualized Educational Plans.
- Teaching and learning in special education and early childhood education will be provided in accordance with best practices in identification of students with disabilities.
- Students with special needs will be instructed with age/grade level typical peers to the extent appropriate.
- Students with delays in social development and problems with behavior will improve their social skills and behavior through participation in social skills groups and appropriate behavioral intervention.
- Students receiving special education and early childhood education will be instructed in accordance with best practices, as delineated by revised state regulations and policies.

UPDATE ON NEW MIDDLE SCHOOL SCHEDULE

Mrs. Parker reviewed the change in the middle school schedule to allow for a double period time in the beginning of each day to address SRBI needs and literacy needs. For grade 6, the program is new. The double period for the students in grade 6 provides the opportunity to transition students to the school and gradually transition to the same reading/language arts program that exists for 7th and

8th graders. The transition of students includes getting to know the school (lockers, cafeteria, etc.), a study skills program, a tech literacy unit, and then a reading program similar to 7th and 8th grades.

Mrs. Parker also reported that World Language is a “fine and practical arts” section this year, a quarter-year program. This change was the result of student enrollment/staffing issues following budget approval.

DONATION OF A GIFT

Mrs. Santora Fox requested acceptance of a gift from a parent. The gift, 45 silk-screened sweatshirts with a music theme and valued at \$15/each, was offered to the Samuel Staples Elementary School music department.

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education accepts with gratitude the gift of 45 sweatshirts for Samuel Staples Elementary School. Allan, Katz. Approved. Unanimous.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Samuel Staples Elementary School: Mrs. Santora Fox reported a new online Web site will be used to log-in and monitor dismissal changes. The program should eliminate paperwork and make tracking of dismissal changes easier for the staff. She also reported on a concern about food/snacks in relation to the new wellness policy and guidelines. Snack foods are used for rewards, celebrations, birthdays, etc. The concern about childhood obesity, food allergies and loss of educational time has brought about new food guidelines. She has requested that no food be supplied for birthday celebrations and that the traditional celebrations (Halloween, holiday party, Valentine celebration and end-of-year party) include only healthy food. This information has been communicated to parents, encouraging them to support the wellness policy, and encouraged them to send health snack food with their children on a daily basis.

Helen Keller Middle School: Mrs. Parker has begun a series of evening coffee/discussions for parents. The first meeting addressed the topic of SRBI. The school staff is preparing for the Tri-State Science Visitation.

Special Services: Dr. Dekle reported the number of students is down slightly from last year. Her written report listed the workshops and trainings attended by staff.

Assistant Superintendent and Director of Curriculum: Mrs. Mas reported the Grade Eight ILA teachers will be piloting a writing portfolio program this year. The program is aligned with the Joel Barlow High School’s Junior Writing Portfolio Program. Teachers and reading specialists will meet with Jonathan Budd and Jack Powers, JBHS teachers, to review student work using the diagnostic rubric for the first required portfolio writing sample. Mrs. Mas, along with Carrie Wessman Huber, Sally Francia and Sara Broas will present a two-hour session, *Defining the “I” in SRBI: Reciprocal Teaching Across the Content Areas* for the Connecticut Reading Association. Mrs. Mas attended the groundbreaking ceremony of the Bridgeport Discovery Inter-district Magnet School. The K-12 school will be a full collaboration with the Bridgeport Discovery Museum and the Beardsley Zoo.

Superintendent: Dr. Fossbender provided copies of a report on Connecticut Municipal Budget Adoption Experiences FY 2009-2010. Copies of the CAPSS survey regarding impact of budget reductions on programs and class sizes were also distributed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Christine Calvert: stated her concern about the new homeroom period at HKMS, particularly regarding the reading portion of the program. Mrs. Parker explained that the program has focused on transition activities, but focus will soon be on reading. Mrs. Calvert also commented that the new SSES policy regarding snacks is good, but the cafeteria is still serving cookies and Rice Krispy Treats. Mrs. Santora Fox, Dr. Fossbender and Mrs. Sullivan will discuss the issue with the food service vendor, Chartwells.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Dr. Underberger requested information regarding the number of meals served in the cafeteria in September and October compared with last year.

Dr. Underberger noted that the meeting was the last for John Allan as a voting member of the board. He thanked Mr. Allan for his work, especially in contract negotiations, and his contributions to the school, students, parents, and Easton community. His remarks were echoed by the other members of the board. Dr. Fossbender also thanked Mr. Allan.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education recess to executive session for discussion of performance of a municipal employee, Peggy Sullivan. Allan, Treidel. Approved. Unanimous.

Dr. Fossbender was asked to be present.

The meeting recessed at 9:40 pm.

RECONVENE

The Chair reconvened the meeting in public session at 10:04 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: move to adjourn the meeting. Allan, Treidel. Approved. Unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Al Treidel, Board Secretary

Recorded by Mary Maday