

EASTON BOARD OF EDUCATION

November 17, 2009

Minutes

Filed subject to approval.

Present: Cohen, Dunsby, Katz, Maiorano(8:00 pm), Treidel, Underberger
Administration: Fossbender, Mas, Sullivan, Fox Santora, Parker, Kaplan, Dekle
Others: five people in the audience

RECOGNITION

John Allan was recognized for his service on the Board of Education. The Helen Keller Middle School Select Choir, directed by Megan Kirk, entertained the group of board members, many parents and community members with a vocal selection.

Dr. Fossbender called the meeting to order at 7:52 pm.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Dr. Fossbender read the law regarding the election of officers. The election of Chair and Secretary followed. The voting was conducted by paper ballot, with Dr. Fossbender collecting the ballots and announcing the results.

Motion: move to nominate Alfred Treidel for Chairman of the Easton Board of Education. Katz, Underberger. Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: move to nominate Daniel Underberger for Secretary of the Easton Board of Education. Katz, Cohen. Approved. Unanimous

Mr. Treidel, on behalf of the entire board of education, thanked Dr. Katz for his leadership over the past two years. Dr. Fossbender, on behalf of all the administrators, expressed appreciation for Dr. Katz's service.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: move to approve the minutes of October 13, 2009 meeting as submitted. Katz, Underberger. Approved, 4-0-1. Mr. Dunsby abstained.

Motion: move to approve the minutes of the October 16, 2009 meeting as corrected. Underberger, Cohen. Approved. 4-0-1. Mr. Dunsby abstained.

Corrections; correct spelling of Dr. Katz name, Alan Katz; and Dr. Katz reported a quorum for the Easton Board.

UPDATE ON FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM

Mrs. Sullivan reported the total number of meals served is down compared with last year, but there was improvement in the numbers from September to October. This was an expected trend with the change to the new food service vendor. The POS system has been introduced in all the schools. The card/charge system allows parents access to the student's account electronically to monitor available funds and what the child is choosing to purchase. Mrs. Sullivan reported that some concerns about the food served not being in compliance with healthy requirements have been

addressed with Chartwells. Mrs. Parker reported that complaints and issues are addressed as they come up.

Mr. Maiorano arrived (8:00 pm).

Dr. Underberger raised a question regarding the policy of bringing candy to school, specifically an issue related to Halloween candy at SSES. Mrs. Fox Santora responded that the staff is trying to send a consistent message to strive for healthy eating throughout the year and requested that no candy be brought to school. However, she stated that it would have been more appropriate to say "Please do not bring your candy to school." All regular celebrations in school are planned with only healthy food/snacks in compliance with the Wellness policy. Mr. Maiorano expressed a concern about not allowing children to share or gift others with treats, adding that many believe the dictate has gone too far.

Two members of the public, parents of children in the schools contributed their thoughts. One parent commented that there has always been a "no sharing of food" in the school. The other, a parent of a child with allergies, reflected on the social isolation felt when a child cannot partake in the treats brought to share.

Mrs. Mas read the portion of the Wellness policy under discussion. Dr. Fossbender suggested the administrators meet to review the issues of sharing and that the Board of Education discuss the matter further at the next meeting.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT: DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & OPERATIONS

Mr. Sullivan noted that the year-to-date report is now posted on the website for board members to review. The expected reimbursement rate from the state for this year is now expected to be 70%; the budget was for 75%. The State has indicated the level of funding for next year will be 65%.

Health Insurance: Mrs. Sullivan reported claims have been averaging \$145,000/month which is less than the budgeted monthly amount. She was informed that renewals are currently coming in with a 20-30% increase, but she will have better information closer to budget time.

Electricity: the contract for the generation rate was recently renewed after going out to bid. The renewal contract, ending in 2014, has a savings of ½ cent per kilowatt hour.

DONATION OF TELEVISION TO SAMUEL STAPLES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

A parent has offered a donation of a 48" Sony Rear projection television for use in the Music Department at Samuel Staples Elementary School.

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education accepts with gratitude the donation of a television for Samuel Staples Elementary School as described. Katz, Underberger.

Approved. Unanimous.

PARTICIPATION IN THE HOTS PROGRAM AT SAMUEL STAPLES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The H.O.T.S. Program is funded at a cost of \$6,500 by the PTA. The board is required to formally confirm continuation in the program.

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approves continuation of participation in the H.O.T.S. Program at the Samuel Staples Elementary School. Katz, Underberger. Approved. Unanimous.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction: Mrs. Mas reported the Tri-State Consortium visit was successfully completed. Mrs. Mas, along with Mrs. Wessman Huber and two other teachers were presenters on the SRBI at the CRA conference. A two-day conference was recently held in Mystic on the topic of SRBI. Transition meetings for transition from 8th grade to the high school have begun.

Helen Keller Middle School: Mrs. Parker reported on staff development activities. The Principal's Series of conversation in September centered on SRBI and in October the topic was bullying. The Veteran's Day celebration included 18 veterans speaking to the children in social studies classes. Mrs. Parker thanked the PTA for re-energizing the school store and their help with the students in the operation of the store.

Special Services: Dr. Dekle reported the number of referrals is down. She attributed the decline to the number of intervention and reporting programs now in place. The staff is working on the new LD guidelines and SRBI program.

Samuel Staples Elementary School: Mrs. Fox Santora reported on the helicopter visit to the school to celebrate Veteran's Day. Two army and two marine pilots were also present and spoke with the children about their experiences as helicopter pilots. The third annual International Day for Tolerance was held and showcased cultural differences. Mrs. Fox Santora thanked the PTA for their helpful and creative ways to bring the school together as a family. They are sponsoring a Turkey Trot involving the donation of non-perishable food for the food bank.

Superintendent: Dr. Fossbender distributed the Annual Enrollment Projections by Dr. Prowda. The projections show a decline in enrollment over the next ten years. The Strategic School Profile reports were also distributed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education recess to executive session for discussion of performance of municipal employees, D. Dekle, K. Fox Santora, C. LaTorre, J. Parker and S. Kaplan. Katz, Underberger. Approved. Unanimous.

Dr. Fossbender was asked to be present.

The meeting recessed at 9:15 pm.

RECONVENE

The Chair reconvened the meeting in public session at 10:24 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 10:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Underberger, Board Secretary

Recorded by Mary Maday