

EASTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
December 8, 2009
Minutes

Filed subject to approval.

Present: Cohen, Dunsby, Katz, Treidel, Underberger (by telephone)
Administration: Fossbender, Mas, Sullivan, Fox-Santora, LaTorre, Parker, Kaplan, Dekle
Others: four people in the audience

RECOGNITION

Dr. Fossbender recognized Dr. Alan Katz for his service, competence and professionalism on the Board of Education. An 8th grade Helen Keller Middle School student, Milo Barer, sang a song to honor Dr. Katz. Mr. Treidel, on behalf of the board, schools and community thanked Dr. Katz for his contributions to education in Easton.

Mr. Treidel called the meeting to order at 7:50 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: move to approve the minutes of the November 17, 2009 meeting as corrected. Katz, Dunsby. Approved. Unanimous.

Corrections: page 1, under Update on Food Service, line 3, POS refers to Point of Sale

AGENDA ADDITION

Motion: move to add an executive session for the discussion of contract negotiations, collective bargaining/paraprofessional contract. Katz, Cohen. Approved. Unanimous.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ER9 WELLNESS POLICY

Following discussion of the implementation of the ER9 Wellness Policy at the previous meeting, the administrative team met for discussion. The recommendation agreed on was to encourage healthy food, but not prohibit non-healthy food. At the elementary level, healthy foods will be strongly encouraged for the four all-school celebrations (Halloween, holiday, Valentine's Day and end-of-school), but non-healthy food will not be prohibited. Birthday celebrations are to be activity-centered celebrations with no food involved. At the middle school level, healthy foods will be encouraged; non-healthy foods will be discouraged, but not prohibited. On the issue of "sharing" food items, this practice is prohibited during lunch at the elementary school. At the middle school, the practice will be discouraged.

Mrs. Mas will take these recommendations to the Wellness Committee and recommendations will be communicated to the school community.

The Board of Education did not take formal action on the practices, but were unanimously in support of the recommendations.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT: DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & OPERATIONS

Mrs. Sullivan reported on the following:

1. The Board of Finance budget calendar was distributed. The school budget is due to the BOF on February 27, and the Public Hearing is scheduled for March 22.

2. The Health Insurance claims and administrative costs are averaging \$140,000, below the monthly contributions.
3. Year-to-date financials are now posted on the website for review. The Town of Easton has reduced the Board of Education budget by \$83,000 for the ARRA monies received as agreed to at the October meeting.

PER PUPIL EXPENDITURES: DRG A SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Mrs. Sullivan compiled a listing of the DRG A school districts and the per pupil expenditures for the 07-08 school year (the latest available) from the Connecticut Department of Education. The comparison is a good one, and excludes debt service and capital expenditures. Easton is #8 of the 9 school districts, with a per pupil expenditure of \$12,182.80.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion: move to recess to executive session for a discussion of contract negotiations, collective bargaining/paraprofessional contract. Katz, Cohen. Approved. Unanimous.

The meeting recessed at 8:15 pm.

RECONVENE

The Chair reconvened the meeting in public session at 8:21 pm.

Motion: move to approve the recommendations for the negotiated contract with the paraprofessionals as discussed. Dunsby, Katz. Approved. Unanimous.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

As this is Dr. Fossbender's last meeting of the Easton Board of Education, he thanked the board for their support, vision and advocacy of students. He also thanked the PTAs of both schools, the parents, staff, administrators, Easton Education Foundation and community. Mr. Treidel, on behalf of the board and community, thanked Dr. Fossbender for his great personal integrity, his vision and his intellect. He added all had been enriched by Dr. Fossbender's presence and that he left his mark in Easton.

Assistant Superintendent and Director of Curriculum: Mrs. Mas reported the commendations and recommendations of the Tri-State Consortium visit/evaluation of the ER9 science curriculum had been received and would be shared with the boards at the January meeting. Planning for an improved transition from the 8th grade transition to high school is ongoing. ILA teachers and middle school reading and writing specialists met with Jonathan Budd, director of the Joel Barlow Writing Center and Mrs. Mas to review the diagnostic rubric used for the scoring of writing samples. Julie Giaccone, CREC Consultant and Craig Creller, mathematics curriculum administrator provided an afterschool workshop at HKMS to support teaching literacy strategies across the content areas. The focus of the workshop was on summarizing and note taking.

Special Services: Dr. Dekle reported the staff is working on the new eligibility guidelines and SRBI program.

Samuel Staples Elementary School: Assistant Principal, Carrie LaTorre, reported she attended training on the new Power School software. She believes the new student management system will

be very useful and informative for the staff. Both schools plan to go “live” with the new system January 1, 2010.

Helen Keller Middle School: Assistant Principal, Susan Kaplan, also attended the training on Power School and added that the information will be very helpful in transitioning students from the lower school, and in transitioning students to the high school. Mrs. Parker reported on another very successful Pancake Breakfast. Students will be doing ERB testing on the writing prompt in the next two days. She also commented on the wonderful and generous efforts of students to do good for others by organizing “drives” to collect food, books, toys, etc. for those in need.

Superintendent:

1. Settlement Update: the CAGE update on settlements of administrator and teacher contracts was distributed.
2. Strategic School Profile: the corrected Strategic School Profile was distributed.
3. Policy Manual: Dr. Fossbender recommended a plan for review and update of the Policy Manual. This plan will be implemented with the new Superintendent.

PUBLIC COMMENT

On behalf of the Easton PTA, Mrs. Meskers thanked Dr. Fossbender for his contributions to education and his partnership with the PTA.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

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

Dr. Fossbender was asked to be present.

The meeting recessed at 8:46 pm.

RECONVENE

The Chair reconvened the meeting in public session at 10:05 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 10:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Katz, Acting Board Secretary

Recorded by Mary Maday