

MINUTES
ORANGE BOARD OF EDUCATION
October 16, 2017

Minutes approved at the November 20, 2017 BOE Meeting

Attendance

Present: Chairman Kraut, Mr. Cap, Ms. Riccio, Mr. Young, Mrs. Saccente, Mr. Ziman, Mrs. Bunnell, Mrs. Browe, Mrs. Pucillo

Absent: Mrs. Hadlock

The meeting was taped by OGAT

Also present: Dr. Scarpetti, Ms. Sierakowski, Dr. Russo, Mrs. Slowik, Mrs. James, Mrs. Coppola, Mrs. Ciambriello, Mrs. Leapley, Mrs. Barnes, Mr. Flynn, Ms. Welander, Mr. Hickey, Mrs. DelPrete, Mrs. Ruiz, Mrs. Pedenski, Mrs. Cohen, Mrs. Zamachaj, Raymond Richo

Call to Order

The regular meeting was called to order by Chairman Kraut at 7:39 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited lead by Frankie Ruiz, and the Mission Statement was read by Mrs. Pucillo. Mrs. Pucillo shared her thoughts about having a different member of the Board read the Mission Statement each month.

Public Participation

Mr. Frankie Ruiz addressed the Board informing them that he is allergic to peanuts, tree nuts, eggs and more. Frankie's brother is allergic to gelatin and pork. Frankie feels that food should be taken away from celebrations because it is done just for the sake of eating. Frankie said he knows how it feels not be able to consume treats because of his allergies. Frankies thinks that there should be games and activities instead of food at celebrations.

Mr. Michael Hickey an ESL Teacher at East Haven High School and father to a son at Race Brook School addressed the Board Members in favor of food-free celebrations. Mr. Hickey is one of four boys in his family; he has four nephews and three nieces. One of his nephews has autism and limiting his exposure to allergenic food has been transformative and his school district has played a big role in that. Mr. Hickey feels children will adapt to not having food based celebrations. Mr. Hickey said the district provides many wonderful and enriching things to our students on a daily basis, Orange is a strong inclusive community that treats our most vulnerable in the same high regard as we do every child.

Mr. Raymond Richo a Turkey Hill parent addressed the Board. Today was his daughter's birthday; Mr. Richo brought popcorn and pre-packaged apple slices into the classroom. Mr. Richo mentioned before bringing the snacks into the classroom he checked to be sure no one was allergic to popcorn or apples. Mr. Richo said food should not be eliminated entirely from celebrations but people should be more careful.

***Public Participation
(continued)***

Mrs. Sue DelPrete addressed the Board indicating she was in favor of food free celebrations. Mrs. DelPrete said she felt compelled to speak after hearing some parents speak about their heart-wrenching accounts of having children who have life-threatening food allergies. Mrs. DelPrete said schools should be a safe haven for children and their parents. Mrs. DelPrete pointed out that the district has accessibility for wheelchairs, handicap parking and has made great improvements to increase security. Mrs. DelPrete said, why not include food-free celebrations as another preventive measure.

Mrs. Danielle Ruiz said she has two children with food allergies. While she encourages her children to have their own opinions, she doesn't agree with her son who addressed the Board earlier in the night. Mrs. Ruiz hopes the Board will find some compromise. Mrs. Ruiz said she doesn't expect the world to change for her children, there will always be food around them. Mrs. Ruiz said she has taught her children how to advocate for themselves, read labels and even order for themselves when eating away from home. Many parents think that the policies in place are being followed when in fact they are not. Guidelines in place for birthday celebrations reads, we ask that you contact the teacher 48 hours in advance to let them know, per policy, a healthy alternative should be sent in as well. Mrs. Ruiz said this is not happening, parents are not adhering to the policy and she never knows before a birthday celebration. Mrs. Ruiz does keep safe snacks at school for her children but how many times can a child eat an oreo. A healthy alternative is not being offered. Mrs. Ruiz asked what do we do about the policy and guidelines that parents were told was in place to keep children safe and then they're not being followed. By not following policies are putting teachers in an unfair position.

Mrs. Jessica Zamachaj has a son at Turkey Hill and is a teacher at Amity High School. Mrs. Zamachaj didn't come to the meeting tonight to speak but felt compelled to. Her son is a type I diabetic, Mrs. Zamachaj said she was very upset when she received the Halloween celebration notification. If her son eats a cupcake his sugar will go to 300 and he doesn't have insulin at school which means for the rest of the day, he will be in an anger mode. Mrs. Zamachaj would love to see sweets and snacks not offered.

Mindy Murphy said she speaks with respect and compassion for those who have food allergies but feels we are not doing right by them or others if the we fail to uphold our shared beliefs in the Orange School System. All children can/will learn the necessary skills to be contributing members in a global society. If we are falsely tailoring the community they are in, we are clearly preparing them or not teaching them necessary skills to be contributing members in a global society, rather preparing them for failure. As an educator, and a parent Mrs. Murphy feels the most ideal situation is for the children with food allergies to be equipped with the know how early on with what they can and can't eat in order to keep themselves safe. Modifications are made for those who can't take standardized tests, why not do the same with children with food allergies. Will parents be told what they can and can't pack in their child's lunch? Fair is not always equal.

***Public Participation
(continued)***

Mrs. Samantha Cohen who has a child at Race Brook School said she didn't plan on speaking at tonight's meeting but said she felt compelled to do so. Mrs. Cohen said she has been making latkes to celebrate Hanukkah since her family moved into town but would be willing to give up making them and look for alternative ways to help educate other children in the community about Hanukkah. She said she would not want another child's hospitalization or death on her hands.

Mrs. Ronnette James (& Mrs. Dawn Coppola) addressed the Board. Mrs. James said the food free celebrations is a difficult topic and she thought long and hard about speaking at tonight's meeting. Mrs. James thanked the Board for all their hard work. Mrs. James said she has dear friends whose children have food allergies and their safety is as important as the safety of her own children. As PTO President at Peck Place School Mrs. James has had the opportunity to speak to many parents. While there are a handful of parents who are in favor of the policy being presented, the majority do not want to see the policy adopted. The district educates children of many different needs, and make modifications to do so. Mrs. James says the district has put modifications in place for children with allergies and the district hasn't had one instance where a child has had a reaction. Why is the district taking broad brush and taking away what children look forward to. The risk to children with allergies is during snack and lunch each day and what would the district be solving by taking away four classroom parties each year. Mrs. James' colleagues who work in the Milford school system say their non food celebrations are next to nonexistent. Mrs. James says it is impossible to create an environment where everyone's preferences are met perfectly all the time; that doesn't reflect the real world. Mrs. James said she feels the policy is a slippery slope. Will the next step be eliminating all prepared foods from home, including lunch and snacks. Mrs. James wanted to know why parents weren't surveyed about this issue.

Mrs. Dedra Leapley thanked the Board for the opportunity to address them and for all the time spent on this task/policy. Mrs. Leapley shared an article from Today.com about how a school system in Illinois handled this policy. Cupcakes, cookies and chips and healthy snacks like these have been banned from many US schools in recent years; now a school district in Illinois is going a step further and banning all food from classroom celebrations. The ban went into effect with the 2016-17 school year, alternative non-food celebrations are allowed. The Superintendent feels by eliminating snacks will help children develop a healthy attitude towards food; having fun without eating. The Superintendent said that concerns over food allergies were a factor in the district's new guidelines.

Mrs. Roo Ciambriello started by saying another parent was suppose to be at the meeting this evening and did plan to speak but her child had a reaction and was currently in the emergency room. Ms. Ciambriello said in her mind one of the greatest detriments when it comes with a community dealing with polarizing topics is the spread of misinformation. Food allergies are a nuance and they feel new and there is a lot of unfamiliarity and misunderstandings around them. One in thirteen children have food allergies, 30% of children with food allergies are allergic to more than one food, 200,000 people under the age of 18 require emergency medical care for allergic reactions to food each year, 200 die each year due to anaphylaxis, about 40% of food allergic children have experienced a life threatening reaction, more than 15% of school aged children have had a reaction

***Public Participation
(continued)***

during school hours. The CDC and State Department of Education recommend food free celebrations for schools. Many towns in CT have already implemented food free celebrations. Mrs. Ciambriello stated that epipens are not full proof.

Mrs. Misty Barnes (& Mrs. Marie Pedenski) stated that 25% of people who die from an anaphylactic response are completely unaware they have a food allergy. As she stated before (Thursday, October 12th) when growing up in the area and visiting friends in Orange, she would pass a home of a person whose house was covered by pine trees because he was allergic to the sun. Neighbors did not plant pine trees to shield him. Once this person left his property he was taking a risk. Mrs. Barnes says that's what we do with our children everyday by sending them to school we are taking a risk. Mrs. Barnes says she realizes it is difficult and agonizing to be a parent of a child with allergies but stated, it is difficult and agonizing just to be a parent. Mrs. Barnes said an anaphylaxis reaction would be horrible but our school staff is armed and ready to help. The number of deaths for those caused by food allergies are similar to those people being struck by lightning or having a fatal lawn mower accident. All children are different, they have to struggle with things that make them stand out, whether it is intellectually, physically, culturally, religiously but we teach our children to persevere. The same is done with children with allergies, they eat at special tables, special desks, have a special school box, they have to be taught to persevere; encourage these children to self advocate as they mature. (Mrs. Pedenski) Why no parent survey for the food free policy. Sorry for the child who had a reaction today but Mrs. Pedenski stated she wasn't aware of any happening at a school event during the day. More communication about policies the Board are planning to change. Mrs. Pedenski says Race Brook School adheres to the policy there has always been two snacks offered at a celebration. Why not rewrite the policy to include a list of foods that could be included. Hoping the Board would hold their vote until there was more parent input.

Correspondence

None

Consent Agenda

A motion was made by Ms. Riccio and seconded by Mrs. Pucillo to approve the minutes from the September 18, 2017 BOE meeting and the minutes from the Special BOE Meeting of October 12, 2017. Unanimously approved.

Presentation(s)

None

***Superintendent's
Report***

Dr. Scarpetti started his report by wishing the Board Members a happy Boss' Day. He also thanked those who attended the Bus Driver Appreciation Breakfast that was held on October 13th. Dr. Scarpetti informed the Board that he is done riding the school buses, he has completed all the runs. Dr. Scarpetti spoke to Mr. Tom Pisano from Orange Soccer Association when at work last Sunday. Dr. Scarpetti has been asked to announce that Trunk R Treat is being held on Saturday, October 28th at High Plains Community Center. (Rain date is October 29th). Dr. Scarpetti reminded the Board that there is no school for students on Election Day but that teachers will participate in a Professional Learning on that day. Dr. Scarpetti reminded the Board about the Professional Learning calendar that was

***Superintendent's
Report (cont.)***

shared with them. The Professional Learning calendar was created over the summer and outlines all the Professional Learning dates for the year. The survey results from the calendar input survey have been shared with Board Members. Bethany will be starting on a Wednesday, Amity will be proposing a start date of Wednesday but Woodbridge is proposing a Monday start. Mr. Neil Armstrong, the district Senior IT Specialist started today, Mr. Armstrong will be introduced to the Board in the near future.

Ms. Sierakowski stated that the Finance Committee met prior to the BOE meeting and they discussed all line items against the budget. It is still early in the year but all accounts are tracking well. Initial meetings have taken place for the development of the 2018-19 budget. A timeline and dates for budget workshops will be shared with Board Members shortly. Governor Malloy released his fourth budget proposal today (October 16th). The Governor states that his budget is "a lean, no-frills, no nonsense budget." Some ECS funding would be reinstated to some districts; Orange is not on the list for reinstated ESC funds. The auditors are scheduled to come in starting tomorrow (October 17th) to conduct their full financial audit for 2016-17. The Auditors are required to submit their findings to the State by December 31st. AHERA (Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act) was enacted requiring inspection of school buildings for asbestos-containing building materials and perform asbestos related actions to prevent or reduce asbestos hazards. The district has a company come in twice a year to conduct those inspections. The first inspection was done over the summer. Mr. Luzzi and Mr. McLaughlin will be attending a 16 hour training class to educate them on minor repairs and awareness training.

Dr. Russo is currently working on the the applications for Title I, Title II and Title III grants. Title I is dedicated to improve basic programs, Title II is for professional learning and Title III for english language learners. Applications will be submitted on or by Friday. The Leadership Team continues their workshop on Cognitive Coaching, the last session is scheduled for tomorrow (October 17th). The training will help the Leadership Team support the district new initiatives. Specialists have started their trainings. All classroom teachers have attended follow-up process writing training and great feedback was received by teachers. Teachers worked with their grade level colleagues to plan lessons since the initiative is new. STEAM meeting scheduled for tomorrow. Music teachers attended a workshop on Saturday learning about music learning theory and movement related to that. Grade 1 teachers engaged in a overview session with their Smithsonian science kit. Results of survey will be shared at curriculum sub-committee meeting.

Mrs. Slowik said the Special Education Department, like all other departments is starting to plan their 2018-19 special education budget.

Board Business

***2018-19 Board of
Education Meeting
Dates***

The 2018-19 Board of Education meeting dates were presented as a first read at the September 18th BOE meeting. Board Members were asked to review the dates and contact Dr. Scarpetti with any concerns. A motion was made/seconded by Mrs. Bunnell/Ms. Riccio to approve the dates presented. Discussion: Mr. Cap said he

**2018-19 Board of
Education Meeting
Dates (continued)**

loves to see students attend the Board Meetings, he is wondering if the meetings shouldn't start at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Ziman wondered if the Finance Sub-Committee would be able to meet at 6:30 p.m. instead of 7:00 p.m. Ms. Riccio stated she didn't see a problem with the Finance Sub-Committee starting at 6:30 p.m. Mr. Kraut, Mr. Cap, Mrs. Pucillo, Mrs. Bunnell, Mr. Young, Mr. Ziman, Mrs. Browe, Ms. Riccio voted in favor of, Mrs. Hadlock absent, Mrs. Saccente abstained. Motion carries.

**2nd Read -- Policy
6142.101 - Student
Nutrition & Physical
Activity (School
Wellness Policy)**

A motion was made by Ms. Riccio and seconded by Mrs. Saccente to adopt policy 6142.101 Student Nutrition & Physical Activity (School Wellness Policy). Mr. Ziman made a motion to amend policy 6142.10 by eliminating the paragraph labeled Curricular Events and adding the following to the language under Classroom Celebrations (Mr. Ziman did provide each Board Member with the verbiage at their places). The additional language under Classroom Celebrations would be: This no food policy will be extended to include all curricular events and school celebrations as well. Mr. Cap seconded the motion. Discussion: Mrs. Bunnell said she also was going to make a motion to amend the policy once the Board voted on Mr. Ziman's motion. Mr. Young responded to Mr. Ziman's motion and the first motion to adopt the policy asking the Board to take no action at this time. Mr. Young would like to see community input in the form of a survey. **Much discussion followed.** Mr. Cap also noted he is surprised that the current food policy is not being followed at the schools, Mr. Kraut agreed it is concerning. Mrs. Saccente also expressed her concern about the current policy not be followed. Mr. Kraut voiced his concern about the security of unpacked food being brought into the schools, as a community we do our best to provide a safe environment for all students. By eliminating food the district adds another layer of security to the students. The school nurses also have safety & security concerns as well when food is being brought into the schools. Mrs. Browe said if the cafeteria was to provide the food for celebrations, this would eliminate the concerns about outside food being brought in.

Mr. Young's motion (to defer/postpone) was seconded by Mrs. Browe. Mr. Ziman said it has been over two years, it's time for the Board to make a decision to continue to put it off doesn't make sense. He acknowledges it is a hard decision to make. Mr. Young, Mrs. Browe, Mrs. Bunnell voted in favor of, Mrs. Pucillo, Mr. Cap, Mr. Kraut, Mrs. Saccente, Ms. Riccio and Mr. Ziman voted against. Motion fails.

Next was Mr. Ziman's motion to amend language (which was seconded by Mr. Cap) Mr. Cap, Mr. Ziman, Mr. Kraut, Ms. Riccio, Mrs. Pucillo voted in favor of, Mrs. Browe, Mrs. Bunnell, Mrs. Saccente and Mr. Young voted against, motion carries.

Mrs. Bunnell made a motion to amend the language under Classroom Celebrations. Food is permitted for holiday and other events. Food served at these events must meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and must ensure safety and inclusion for all children. The Personnel/Policy/ Transportation committee in cooperation with the Superintendent and School Nurse will publish an approved food list prior to the start of each school year. The foods on this list will be provided by the cafeteria

***2nd Read -- Policy
6142.101 - Student
Nutrition & Physical
Activity (School
Wellness Policy)
(cont.)***

only. This portion of the policy will go into effect beginning in the new academic year 2018-19. Also indicating that this amendment keeps birthday celebrations as food free celebrations. (Mrs. Bunnell's amendment would replace Mr. Ziman's amended language) Motion was seconded by Mrs. Saccente. Much discussion followed. Mr. Kraut questioned the cafeteria's role. Mrs. Browe reminded the Board that during a committee meeting it was determined that the cafeteria could provide menu items served as treats. Mr. Ziman wondered if the cafeteria would be able to provide for all classes. Ms. Riccio clarified that the cafeteria wouldn't be able to provide (i.e. bake cupcakes) for each classroom on the same day (i.e. Halloween Party). Mrs. Saccente said that food would need to be prepackaged food, students with allergies would not be able to eat something prepared by the cafeteria. More discussion followed. Mrs. Pucillo said why are we doing this, we heard that the current policy isn't being followed.

Recess called at 9:28 p.m. so Mrs. Bunnell could type up language amendment for Board Members to read. A motion was made/seconded by Ms. Riccio/Mrs. Pucillo. Meeting reconvened at 9:51 p.m.

Mr. Young made a motion to defer action on Chantelle's motion to amend language. No second, motion fails.

Word "only" was added to Mrs. Bunnell amendment. Mrs. Browe seconded. Discussion followed concerning Curriculum Events. Mrs. Bunnell, Mrs. Browe, Mr. Cap, Mrs. Saccente, Mr. Young voted in favor of, Mrs. Pucillo, Mr. Kraut, Ms. Riccio, Mr. Ziman voted against. Motion passes.

A motion was made/seconded by to adopted Policy 6142.101 as amended by Mrs. Saccente/Ms. Riccio. Some discussion followed. Mrs. Bunnell, Mrs. Browe, Mrs. Pucillo, Mr. Cap, Mr. Kraut, Mrs. Saccente, Mr. Ziman and Ms. Riccio voted in favor of. Mr. Young abstained. Motion passes.

***STANDING
COMMITTEES***

***Finance &
Operations -
Ms. Riccio***

Finance & Operations Sub-Committee met prior to tonight's BOE meeting and discussed the expenditures, everything is in order. Also discussed was the cafeteria and 21st Century, high level of expenses and profit & loss. Cafeteria numbers are up.

***Personnel/Policy
Transportation -
Mrs. Saccente***

There will be a sub-committee meeting in October to summarize any outstanding policies for the new board members to take on.

***Building & Grounds
/ Safety & Security -
Mr. Young***

Primary focus has been addressing the resolution of the solar issue, making sure it meets the district's expectations and budget expectations. Meetings are on-going. No timeline has been established for resolution. Nothing further to report at this time.

***Long Range
Planning Report -
Mrs. Pucillo***

Mrs. Pucillo met with Dr. Scarpetti during the last week of September and discussed and agreed upon the organization of the goals of each of the focus areas on the Strategic Plan. The next sub-committee meeting will take place on October 30th at 6:00 p.m. Mrs. Pucillo is recommending that the Strategic Plan be presented by Dr. Scarpetti at either the November or December BOE meeting. Mrs. Pucillo also recommends that the Long Range Planning Sub-Committee be considered to become an ad-hoc committee. Mrs. Pucillo said she thoroughly enjoyed her time as a Board Member.

***Curriculum /
Instruction /
Technology - Mrs.
Browe***

Last Sub-Committee meeting was on September 18th prior to the BOE meeting and the topic of the meeting was technology. Looking forward to getting back on schedule with meetings taking place on the last Monday of the month. Sub-committee is planning to meet on October 30th. The sub-committee is looking forward to having Dr. Russo catch them up on all the curriculum work that has taken place.

***21st Century Ad-Hoc
- Ms. Riccio***

21st Century continues to move forward. Mrs. Lasto has been doing a good job in immersing herself into the program. 21st Century staff have taken their first-aide certification and CPR classes are scheduled. Homework club is at all schools. Finances and budget for 21st Century are in order. 21st Century staff participated in a professional development which went well.

***ACES Report - Ms.
Riccio***

ACES' board met last Thursday. There was a lot of conversation about the Leeder Hill Project. ACES purchased land and is building Leeder Hill School on it. The State of CT has committed 46 million of a 55 million dollar project. ACES is considering a bond in order to pay contractors should payments from the State be slow. The Governing Board has not approved the bond yet. The Governing Board wanted to be sure supporting districts would not be liable for the bond in any way. ACES created and approved their 2018-19 calendar.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Mrs. Saccente and seconded by Mrs. Pucillo. No discussion. Unanimous vote to adjourn at 10:25 PM.

INFORMATIONAL – Next meeting – **Monday, November 20, 2017** at 7:30 p.m. in the Upstairs Conference Room located in the BOE Offices.

Respectfully submitted,
Marie Acampora