

WILLINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
Minutes
May 14, 2019
Town Office Building, Lower Level Meeting Room
7:00 p.m.

Audio Recording: yes

Notes Taken: yes

Members Present:

Herb Arico

Tracey Anderson

Michelle Doucette Cunningham

Ann Grosjean

Chiara Bambara

Members Absent:

Elena Testa

Stephanie Summers

Also present: Superintendent of Schools Phil Stevens and Principal of HMS, Ken Craig

1. Call to Order: M. Cunningham called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

2. Present to Speak: None

3. Presentation

A. iReady Assessment Program by HMS Principal, Ken Craig

K. Craig presented on “Re-evaluating Our District-wide Assessment tools: A presentation on Willington’s vetting process”. He discussed the importance of re-evaluating our assessment tools because instructional decisions must be based on assessment data that is aligned to curriculum, current best practices and the CCSS. Our current assessment tool, STAR, does not best align to our new CCSS aligned curriculum. The committee has extensively looked into other options and recommends iReady as our districts new assessment tool.

4. Communications:

Board of Education members received handmade invitations to the ice cream shop night from Kindergarten students, which will be next Wednesday, May 22nd at Center School.

5. Board of Education Chairman’s Report

A. Schedule summer retreat for board goals

Brenda will reach out to BOE members to schedule the summer retreat for board goals. There is still a regular meeting scheduled for July 9th.

B. Schedule of summer meetings, special meetings for facilities project

This Saturday, May 18th, is the last scheduled Community Engagement meeting. M. Doucette Cunningham mentioned a plan for the near future to schedule sessions at the library on a Tuesday night or Saturday morning as a question and answer session between community members and board of education members. She anticipates scheduling a special meeting in August to discuss the facilities study options.

6. Superintendent Reports

A. Hall School Traffic Concerns

P. Stevens has been monitoring traffic in front of HMS for the last two weeks. The Stafford Resident Trooper loaned us a speed monitor sign to use between May 1st and May 6th, which was placed just after the main entrance heading in the southbound direction towards Willimantic. Data collected during this time included: 85% of cars slowed down when they saw the speed monitor sign, 2,683 cars in a 24 hour period, and an average speed of 33 mph in the morning (which is believed to be inaccurate due to cars slowing down to turn into the parking lot). He displayed a visual of the short amount of stopping time before the crosswalk. There are also trees that when in bloom, limit visibility. An email has been sent to the tree warden to look at fixing this issue. He is also looking at other options for the future including a crossing guard, purchasing a mobile speed sign for the town, and installing flashing lights at the crosswalk. All of these options cost money which is extremely tight at this time. The line of sight from north-bound traffic is significantly better than south-bound.

B. School Calendar Update

The official last day for students is Thursday, June 13th (half day for students, full day for staff) and the last day for staff is Friday, June 14th (full day).

C. Community Engagement Events

There have been small crowds at both Community Engagement events so far. It is estimated that about 40 community members have attended. P. Stevens is planning an additional event at the senior center in the near future. According to the voter results from the referendum last Tuesday, the largest voter turnout was Willington residents ages 50-79 so it is important for more people to learn the options presented in the facilities study. He will also be at Willington Day to answer questions and provide posters to give information. His goal is to reach as many towns people as possible before a survey is sent out in June.

The last presentation brought up many questions from the public on taxpayer impact based on various proposed options. P. Stevens showed the cost estimate for taxpayers in the first 3

years and the cost estimate for taxpayers after bonding. Both of these visuals were displayed at the community engagement events and show exactly how the numbers were calculated.

D. HMS Trout Release

7th and 8th grade students have been raising trout from eggs in the Science classroom this year. This project allows students a daily hands on experience in real life science. At this point in the school year it is an entirely student run project. The initial trout release date was cancelled due to rain and cold temperatures. A new date will be set in the upcoming weeks.

E. SBAC testing

Students in grades 3-8 attended an SBAC Pep rally at HMS which was well received by staff and students. The goal was to take away the stress from the test results and put more focus on effort. SBAC testing took place last week and the beginning of this week. Students are in the process of making up missed tests this week.

F. WESS Negotiations

The new WESS contract will be shared in June once it is finalized. The negotiations team tried to clean up some of the language to make it easier to read. Thank you to Ann and Elena for being part of the negotiating team and to the WESS negotiations team for the collaborative approach.

G. Screen Free Week

Bryan Phillips, CES P.E. teacher and Amy Redding, CES Library Paraprofessional, hosted events during screen free week. Evening hours for the book fair were very successful and all the events were well received by kids, parents and guardians. The Rec department, public library and PTA all hosted events as well.

H. NYC Field Trip

There was a mechanical bus issue on the way to New York, but students made it to the show on time. There was positive feedback from staff, students and parents involved. A special thank you to HMS Vocal teacher Jason Phillips for putting this event together.

7. Financial Report Budget Report

Attachment # 1

There is a total remaining balance of \$234 in the 2018-2019 budget. There is an expected \$31,000 coming in from excess cost at the end of May in the Special Education Budget. Any money that has been spent was contractual or absolutely necessary. Money is being shifted to make sure that we are remaining in the positive. Some of the Medicaid money may need to be applied, but Phil does not anticipate that we will need to go into the 1% account.

8. Committee Reports

No committees met since the last meeting. The Policy Committee will meet June 11th at 6 pm.

9. New Business

A. Approve minutes of ~~April 9, 2019~~ April 11, 2019 meeting

Attachment # 2

M. Doucette Cunningham noted that there was a typo in her section of the board comments. "Add" has an extra d and should be "ad".

Herb Arico made a motion to approve the minutes of the ~~April 9, 2019~~ April 11, 2019 meeting as modified. Motion seconded by Chiara. Bambara.

VOTE:	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Herb Arico	--X--	----	----	----
Tracey Anderson	--X--	----	----	----
Chiara Bambara	--X--	----	----	----
Michelle Doucette Cunningham	--X--	----	----	----
Ann Grosjean	--X--	----	----	----
Stephanie Summers	----	----	----	--X--
Elena Testa	----	----	----	-X---

Passes unanimously.

B. Approve Healthy Food Certification

Attachment # 3

Ann Grosjean made a motion to approve that the Willington Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-251f of the CT General Statutes, certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in our schools, and not exempted from the CT Nutrition Standards published by the CT State Department of Education, will comply with said standards during the period of July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to, school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias and any fundraising activities on school premises, sponsored by the school or by non-school organizations and groups.

Seconded by C. Bambara

VOTE:	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Herb Arico	--X--	----	----	----
Tracey Anderson	--X--	----	----	----
Chiara Bambara	--X--	----	----	----
Michelle Doucette Cunningham	--X--	----	----	----
Ann Grosjean	--X--	----	----	----
Stephanie Summers	----	----	----	--X--

Elena Testa

--X--

A. Grosjean made a motion that the Willington Board of Education will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the CT Nutrition Standards provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and, 3) the food items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meeting are not. The “regular school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held.

Seconded by H. Arico

VOTE:	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Herb Arico	--X--	----	----	----
Tracey Anderson	--X--	----	----	----
Chiara Bambara	--X--	----	----	----
Michelle Doucette Cunningham	--X--	----	----	----
Ann Grosjean	--X--	----	----	----
Stephanie Summers	----	----	----	--X--
Elena Testa	----	----	----	--X--

B. First reading of policies: Child Abuse or Neglect Reporting, Policy 4250; and, Sexual Discrimination and Sexual Abuse, Policy 5145.5 Attachment # 4

The policy committee spent two sessions reading over these policies and feel it is a big improvement over past policies, and linked to state mandates. This will be voted on next month.

C. Approve IT Support Contract

This is a difficult service to find because we have so many unique needs between the schools and town. The superintendent and First Selectwoman believe NOVUS Insight is the company that will best meet our needs. NOVUS is subsidiary of a non profit and they provide IT support service, not products. They will recommend products needed for long term planning, security and efficiency. There is a \$13,000 set up fee that includes a full evaluation of our system and equipment. The cost is a little bit higher than our prior contract, but NOVUS provides flexibility in the level of service on a monthly basis which will allow us to work within our budget. NOVUS had really strong references and is on the state bid list of approved vendors.

T. Anderson made a motion to approve the contract for Novus Insight for one year. Motion seconded by C. Bambara.

VOTE:	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Herb Arico	--X--	----	----	----
Tracey Anderson	--X--	----	----	----
Chiara Bambara	--X--	----	----	----
Michelle Doucette Cunningham	--X--	----	----	----
Ann Grosjean	--X--	----	----	----
Stephanie Summers	----	----	----	--X--
Elena Testa	----	----	----	--X--

Passes unanimously.

D. Approve iReady Assessment Program

C. Bambara made a motion to approve the subscription to the iReady program.

H. Arico seconded the motion

VOTE:	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Herb Arico	--X--	----	----	----
Tracey Anderson	--X--	----	----	----
Chiara Bambara	--X--	----	----	----
Michelle Doucette Cunningham	--X--	----	----	----
Ann Grosjean	--X--	----	----	----
Stephanie Summers	----	----	----	--X--
Elena Testa	----	----	----	--X--

E. Approve employee request for extended leave for child rearing Mary DeGostin-Special ed in CES due in September

A. Grosjean made a motion to approve the request for extended leave for child rearing for Mary DeGostin for the 2019-2020 school year . Motion seconded by T. Anderson.

VOTE:	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Herb Arico	--X--	----	----	----
Tracey Anderson	--X--	----	----	----
Chiara Bambara	--X--	----	----	----
Michelle Doucette Cunningham	--X--	----	----	----
Ann Grosjean	--X--	----	----	----
Stephanie Summers	----	----	----	--X--
Elena Testa	----	----	----	--X--

F. Budget Adjustments for 2019-2020

After significant negotiating, going out to bid, applying for state insurance, and changing dental and life insurance, we ended up with some significant insurance savings. The initial medical increase was 20%, then not more than 14.5%, and ended with a 2% increase. We saw a 13% decrease in dental insurance changing from Guardian to Metlife while provided equivalent benefits. The BOE found minimal savings by changing life insurance providers as well. As a result, the savings identified through all the negotiating will cover the Board's approved budget and no changes need to be made.

G. School Facility Survey

After researching the effectiveness of a townwide mailer containing a survey, the superintendent determined it was not worth the cost. It might be more beneficial to do an online survey sent out through the Digital Backpack and a paper copy in various locations in town.

Many people at community events have expressed interest in taking off options that are just not possible. None of these options will be removed this evening because this was not on the agenda for tonight and the BOE members not present do not have the chance to provide feedback. Some of these options are much less desirable than others. The Board has the possibility of scheduling a special meeting in the last week of May or early June so that if we were to eliminate some options we could get the survey out before the end of school.

P. Stevens will send out a general survey. A. Grosjean thinks all the options on the survey would be too confusing. M. Doucette Cunningham suggests the survey be general in asking what the public wants with the facilities, and not necessarily asking which option is best.

10. Old Business: None

11. Present to Speak

Mike Cioe teacher at HMS thanked the BOE for their work with the budget as we managed to hold on to all of the programs which is wonderful. Also, thanks for approving iReady.

12. Board Comments

C. Bambara is looking forward to the end of the year activities. Thank you K. Craig for the presentation on iReady and P. Stevens for the facilities discussion.

A. Grosjean thanked everyone that did activities for screen free week. They were enjoyable for parents/guardians and students.

T. Anderson thanked K. Craig for the thoroughness of the assessment study and K. Craig and Katie Rychling for bringing the trout program to the classroom.

H. Arico thanked the P. Stevens for his thoroughness with all the agenda items, and K. Craig for his presentation. He is interested in seeing the impact of iReady in the future.

Michelle asked to please let the Board know the new date of the trout release.

13. Executive Session

A. Executive session to discuss potential properties for a new school site if necessary

H. Arico made a motion to move into executive session to discuss potential properties for a new school site if necessary, and invite the superintendent.

C. Bambara seconds the motion. All approve.

The Board moved into executive session at 9:15 p.m.

The Board moved out of executive session at 9:45 p.m.

14. Adjournment

***Next regular meeting June 11, 2019**