

B. Information: Program Highlight – Superintendent Long-Term Goals and Annual Objectives, 2006-2007

Dr. Bernard noted that this part of the meeting was being televised.

Dr. Bernard said that the same five general areas are used each year, but with different objectives. The full document is available on our website for public review. She said there will be a presentation concerning 1.3, “Implement second year grant resources and increase reading proficiency through the new *Project Expanding Horizons*” at a Board meeting at the end of October or early November. She said that Mrs. Richard will also be coming before the Board in the near future to comment on 2.4, “Implement refinements in the reauthorization of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA), with particular emphasis on Response to Intervention. In regard to 2.8, “Develop and implement a *special education* program improvement plan for George H. Robertson School, to ensure Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP),” there will be more information about this and about test scores on October 12. Likewise, 4.4, “*Diagnose results* of the Connecticut Mastery Tests and Connecticut Academic Performance Tests and continue to use results to modify classroom practices,” will also be discussed on October 12. Under 5.3, “Refine *student portfolio system* consistent with the district graduation requirements,” Dr. Bernard said that Mr. Britton will talk about this more in the future. Concerning 5.4, “Pilot standards-based *math software* system (grades 6-8),” she said that in the spring we will bring the software system before the Board for review.

Dr. Bernard said that 1.4, “Continue to strengthen *preschool literacy efforts* through the School Readiness Council to include early childhood experiences, school readiness, and transition to kindergarten” is very important. There is a waiting list and there seems to be an “ever-increasing need” in town for pre-school. She said that sometime in the future we should discuss preschool facilities. Concerning 1.7, “Apply for funding to increase programs in the *sciences, mathematics, and/or engineering areas*,” Dr. Bernard said there is an engineering Perkins grant under the Tech Department at CHS pending. Mr. Britton said the grant “could be up to \$65,000.”

Under 2.2, “Implement modified practices using the data developed from Effective Schools, Alumni, and New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) *Surveys*,” Dr. Bernard said that the same survey that was sent out two years ago to alumni will be sent out to seniors who graduated in 2003-2004. The questions are the same for comparative purposes. Concerning 2.7, “Develop and increase specialized programs for *students with special needs*,” Dr. Bernard said that, as around the country, Coventry has an increasing number of students in this category.

Under 3.5, “Continue to develop initiatives to further enhance customer service and to ensure *welcoming school environments*,” Dr. Bernard said that the goal is to have the entrances welcoming as well as to have good signage.

Under 4.1, “Continue to improve *curriculum alignment* between classroom offerings and state standards, especially the new math and science standards, through A Balanced Curriculum program,” Dr. Bernard said that this is a 3-5 year project “heavily loaded” in the first few years. She said we are “making good progress,” and that there will be an in-service day on October 10. Under 4.3, “Refine the assessment and servicing of *Challenge and Enrichment students*,” Dr. Bernard said that the advanced placement and UConn co-op classes are helping at CHS. Under 4.6, “Continue expansion of staff development efforts and program implementation related to

Responsive Classroom strategies,” Dr. Bernard said we are looking at anti-bullying strategies. This has been extensively implemented in K-2 and will be continued throughout the rest of the grades. Under 4.7, “Implement new *online coursework and distance learning* opportunities at the high school,” a part-time art teacher has been interviewed with extensive experience in on-line art courses.

Under 5.2, “Implement and *increase computer lab* use by students, Dr. Bernard said that we have made “great strides” with this at GHR. Under 5.5, “Refine and improve *technology infrastructure*, equipment, and email systems,” Dr. Bernard noted that one of the hubs at GHR had to be replaced recently.

C. Trudon said that her daughter used the Renzulli learning system at home. Dr. Bernard said that an entirely different set of skills is needed for on-line research than for textbooks. She said that “skimming and eliminating” is a “huge” skill.

Chairman M. Natusch said that under 2.5, “Continue to develop *awards systems* to reinforce District and Superintendent goals,” he would like to see students in different levels recognized, not just those in the top levels. Dr. Bernard said we may add awards such as “Most Improved Student,” etc.

R. Williams asked if there would be more conversation about curriculum and where we’re headed, and Dr. Bernard said that this will come back as a progress report in the middle of the year and again in the spring. It will be covered under the goals of administrators in the next few meetings, and also under 4.1, “Continue to improve *curriculum alignment*...” She said that the same level of effort is needed for small districts that’s needed for large ones. The town hasn’t had the resources for the job. In response to questions by R. Williams, Dr. Bernard said that curriculum across the grades is very localized. We have state values and the towns interpret these; we can’t “just buy it.” She said that test scores are improved by alignment by teachers, and that “teacher ownership” is very important.

L. Pietrantonio asked if the switch that went down was a Cisco switch, and Mr. Petrone answered that it was. L. Pietrantonio said that we would “have to figure out how to finance ‘\$3,500 here, \$3,500 there,’” and that it is possible to have \$30,000 worth of switches go in one school.

Dr. Bernard said that there will be a periodically scheduled, town-wide tech meeting soon, and this subject will be discussed then.

C. VOTE: Consent Agenda

1. Approve CNH October 27 Field Experience to Harvard, MA
2. Accept Resignation of Jennifer Barkoski, Para-educator at CNH

MOTION: To approve CNH October 27 Field Experience to Harvard, MA and to accept resignation of Jennifer Barkoski, Para-educator at CNH.

By: K. Ryan

Seconded: L. Pietrantonio

Result: Motion passes unanimously.

V. REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN

Chairman M. Natusch said he attended a Great Paths Academy advisory committee meeting with Dr. Bernard, where plans of the new school were shown. He said that 10th grade will be a pilot for the next school year. Five students are enrolled; there is room for one more. He said that under wellness, he had some conversations with teachers from other districts, and we're very much on track in comparison. He said that he and J. Beausoleil will be attending the CABA conference; if anyone else wants to attend, they should contact Kimberlee Michaud.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

C. Trudon asked if the letter from Kathy Taylor concerning bus schedules has been addressed, and Dr. Bernard said that this has been discussed with administration and we will be meeting with Mrs. Taylor soon. This will be on the agenda for the next Board meeting. C. Trudon said that a lot of people have been asking her about it.

VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

VOTE: Approve Minutes of August 31, 2006

MOTION: To approve the August 31, 2006 minutes as presented.

By: L. Pietrantonio

Seconded: C. Trudon

Result: Motion passes 6-0-1 (K. Ryan abstains).

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

A. VOTE: Approve Adoption of Policy #5133 Board of Education Student Representative

MOTION: To approve adoption of Policy #5133 Board of Education Student Representative.

By: L. Pietrantonio

Seconded: C. Trudon

Result: Motion passes unanimously.

MOTION: To approve Revised Policy #5140.1 Wellness.

By: L. Pietrantonio

Seconded: C. Trudon

Dr. Bernard said that this puts us in compliance with the state. We get extra revenue as well. She said she signed the document and it has been sent off.

Result: Motion passes unanimously.

IX. NEW BUSINESS – None.

X. REPORT OF BOARD MEMBERS

A. Information: Fiscal Committee Report – S. Holmes, R. Williams

R. Williams said he did not have a report to present. L. Pietrantonio said that R. Williams did not have one to present at the Board's August 31 meeting either, and asked why not. During the course of an extended discussion, R. Williams said he had wanted to resolve some questions he had about some line items, saying he was confused. He stated that "we seem to have spent a lot of money in the last 1-1 ½ months of the school year." He asked how much line item transfers had to be before

the Fiscal Services Director has to contact either the rest of the members of the Finance Committee or go before the Board. R. Williams asked about the purchase of curriculum software at the end of the last fiscal school year and several other expenses.

Dr. Bernard said that the money has been accounted for, and defended the use of \$80,000 for “very, very deferred textbooks.”

K. Ryan explained the rationale and process of budget transfers. She suggested that since R. Williams will be meeting soon with Mrs. Holmes, he could get his questions answered at that time. She stressed that those questions are a different matter than that of Mrs. Holmes or a Fiscal Committee member presenting the latest “Expenditure Reports for Regular Budget and Grants.”

Mrs. Holmes said that we already have compliance issues as a result of delays.

Dr. Bernard noted that the auditors have been giving us a clean bill of health every year for the past four years that she has been superintendent. Mrs. Holmes said that every school district at the end of the school year is allowed to spend “leftover” money where it wishes, and gave examples. She said that throughout the year some accounts are positive and some negative at any given point in time. She said that although Board members are welcome to attend the meeting on Wednesday, September 20, the report should still be given tonight.

R. Williams, referring back to the 2005-2006 town budget that didn’t pass until the 5th referendum, said that at that time the Board said there wasn’t money for sports; however, there was still money left over at the end of the fiscal year. Mrs. Holmes replied that at the time the budget was worked out (November through January), we didn’t know what we’d have at the end of the fiscal year (June 30). Dr. Bernard said that until we get at least 2/3 of the way through the school year, “we don’t know if we have two nickels to rub together.” She said we don’t want to and indeed can not end up in the red. She said the \$25,000 money for the curriculum software was justified. She said that we budget very carefully and defer a lot of things. She cited the example of having badly needed renovation in a bathroom deferred for 10 years until the \$30,000 necessary to remedy the situation was finally available at the end of the last fiscal year. She said the bathroom was “disgusting.”

During the discussion, several Board members explained examples of budget complexities and suggested that R. Williams get his questions answered as a separate issue from that of the “Expenditure Reports for Regular Budget and Grants” given at each Board meeting.

Chairman M. Natusch said that “what’s being done at the end of the year is being done for the students.” L. Pietrantonio commented that “hindsight is 20/20.” R. Williams said that he was “just curious about the way we spend the money in the last months of the year.”

There was also discussion about the fact that now students who engage in an extra-curricular activity that requires travel five or more times per school year using district funds are required to pay \$25 for each such extra-curricular activity. R. Williams negatively described it as “a tax,” while other Board members disagreed, calling it “a fee.” J. Beausoleil said that she has heard many parents who say that they would contribute.” She said that “nobody has complained.”

Mrs. Holmes presented “Expenditures Reports for Regular Budget and Grants – June, 2006,” copies of which were in Board packets. She said that we successfully made it to the end of the fiscal year.

She said that after honoring all instructional supply obligations and special education contractual obligations, our fiscal year-end balance was a surplus of \$3,491.21. She said that the grants expenditure report for June 2006 looks good. We spent as much of the grant carryover money as we could before June 30, 2006. Any unexpended funds will have to be turned back to the State after the audit is completed.

B. Information: School Building Committee – L. Pietrantonio

L. Pietrantonio reported that the asbestos abatement project at the grammar school and middle school are complete, closed out, and the money expended. He said that Mrs. Holmes can notify the state that the project is complete.

L. Pietrantonio said that he now has issues with the engineer of the water project, Lenard Engineering. The engineer is not submitting paperwork according to the agreed-upon timetable, although he had said he could do the job “on time and on budget.” We have state deadline for paperwork. Construction must be started by next summer. We don’t want to dig next fall after school has started. We need project numbers. The engineer submitted a bill but “we haven’t seen squat” for work. L. Pietrantonio said he would “get terse” in an e-mail to the engineer tomorrow. The contract could be revoked for non-compliance.

Mrs. Holmes said that the engineer has quoted \$1.5 million; it should be \$1.2 million. L. Pietrantonio said the engineer knew the amount approved by the referendum was \$1.2 million. The contract is clear. He said he can’t stress enough the importance of the meeting with the engineer on September 28. If a quorum of the SBC could be present at 6:00 p.m., it would be good to have it at that time. He said he is concerned that the engineer has “lost all scope of the project.” Right now the engineer is off by 30-45 days.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: To adjourn the Board Meeting at 9:02 p.m.

By: K. Ryan

Seconded: C. Couture

Result: Motion passes unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan S. Nimerowski
Board Clerk

September 28, 2006
Approved