

**COVENTRY BOARD OF EDUCATION
APPROVED MINUTES
MEETING OF THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2009**

Members Present: Larry Pietrantonio, Chairman
Kathleen Ryan, Vice Chairman
Cheryl Trudon, Secretary
John Barrett
Mary Kortmann
Richard Williams

Member Absent: Michael Whitham

Also Present: Robert Joyce, Student Representative

Administrators Present: Dr. Donna Bernard, Superintendent
Sherry Holmes, Fiscal Services Director
Judith Richard, Pupil and Staff Support Services Director

Also present were David Petrone, GHR Principal; Troy Hopkins, CHS Principal; Michele Mullaly, CNH Principal; Marybeth Moyer, CGS Principal; Carol Bittner, CHS Band Booster Club parent; Patricia Trask, CHS English Department Chair; several Coventry High School students; and several citizens. The Chronicle newspaper was represented. All motions are directed to the Coventry Board of Education.

I. CALL TO ORDER

By: Chairman, L. Pietrantonio at 7:30 p.m.

Place: Town Hall Annex

II. SALUTE THE FLAG

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by L. Pietrantonio

III. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

Jennifer Beausoleil of 222 Eastview Drive said she has been coming to the Board of Education meetings for over a decade asking for appropriate resources and opportunities for the students. She noted the Advanced Placement (AP) item on tonight's agenda. She said this is one of those resources. She said the grant provided an opportunity for our students to be exposed to other students from other districts. She continued as a parent, it provided children a chance to be exposed to other students like them. She said if you provide students with a greater challenge, they will step up. She said the example is here, and she focused on AP physics. She said there were 10 students who took the test who didn't have to. The proof is here that students will step up, take on additional work, and succeed. She said staff will also step up and that is proven here also.

Mark Malcolm of 59 Old Tolland Turnpike said had an opportunity to visit CGS at Open House this week and it was a wonderful night. He continued saying on tonight's agenda there is a vote on the EASTCONN autism program scheduled for after Executive Session and he would appreciate it being moved earlier in the night. Lastly he noted that the oil tanks were topped off at the end of the year. He said the price was \$2 per gallon. He continued that the 2009-10 locked-in rate was \$1.69 per gallon and he said the Board could have waited to fill tanks at a lesser amount saving the district

approximately \$8,000 - \$9,000. He said this is a systemic problem and we should have saved \$8,000 for the students.

Susan Putnam of 461 Merrow Road and Dawn Messier of 111 Olde Tavern Lane said they were present to address an issue with the Cheney Tech High School bus run. They are concerned about the time their students are getting home in the afternoon, which is after 4:00 p.m. They believe the bus should not be stopping along Route 44 on the way back in the afternoon; not stopping would allow their students to get back to the schools in time to catch the regular bus home. They said they would appreciate the Board looking into the situation for a solution.

IV. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

A. Information: Welcome Student Representative

Dr. Bernard said she was pleased to welcome Robert Joyce a senior at CHS who will sit as the student representative on the Board through the first semester. The Board welcomed Robert.

B. Recognition: "Coventry Pride" – Recognition of CHS Alumnus Michael Icart

Dr. Bernard introduced CHS Alumnus Michael Icart who was here to be recognized for the work he did on the patio at CHS as part of his Eagle Scout project. Michael spoke about the project. Dr. Bernard and the Board gave commendations to Michael.

C. Information: "Coventry Pride" – Superintendent Long-term Goals & Annual Objectives 2009-10

Dr. Bernard handed out the document from the special May Board meeting which focused on goal setting. She noted that the draft of the goals and annual objectives for 2009-10 were included in the Board packets. She said the objectives will be presented in much more detail through the administrators' goal presentations this fall. She handed out the September 1 enrollment figures for reference. She went through the goals and objectives in further detail. That document is attached to these minutes.

Dr. Bernard handed out the budget cut list from March 2009. She said, overall, all of the cuts, noted on this March 30 document, were made. She said there is not a staff member in the district who is not doing more with less. She also noted the class sizes and said they have gone up. She said staff still has to deliver "Best Practice" and things will need to be modified to get it done.

C. Trudon asked for explanation on 1.7 "Initiate student services with Lincoln Academy to better provide for special needs students." Dr. Bernard said Ms. Richard would cover that during her goal presentation in more detail; the program provides alternative day-to-day temporary services for special and regular education students, for up to 180 days per year. C. Trudon asked if we would be bussing Coventry students. Dr. Bernard said yes and that funding for that was written under special education stimulus funds.

R. Williams asked if Coventry students were there now. Ms. Richard said no, not at this time, the year just started. J. Barrett asked what happens to the tuition that has been paid if you don't use the 180 days. Dr. Bernard said it is a tuition program, which is paid up front for the year. R. Williams asked what the tuition was. Ms. Holmes said she didn't have the exact figure in front of her, but it is about \$39K. R. Williams asked if it was a magnet school. Ms. Richard said no; it is an assessment center specializing in instruction of students with emotional needs. Dr. Bernard said the goal is to save

money, to cluster these students, to assess and serve these students rather than spend money on individual cases. There was a short discussion regarding the Regional Educational Service Centers.

M. Kortmann asked if the Board would get to see the CAFE presentation, which is mentioned in the goals. Dr. Bernard said yes; a PowerPoint would be developed and would be shared.

J. Barrett asked regarding the “cut list” how many happened through attrition and how many were laid off. Dr. Bernard said there was a combination of attrition, retirements, resignations and lay offs. J. Barrett asked what the impact would be on the unemployment costs. Dr. Bernard said we will know more in a couple of months. J. Barrett said he is worried about being able to cover that in the budget. C. Trudon said money was added to that account for that purpose.

C. Trudon noted goal 1.5 “Work with outside agencies including the town to address preschool student needs and program development.” She said the Board heard from preschool parents and a consultant regarding developing a new preschool and she asked if this was related. Dr. Bernard said we still have the Readiness Council, but this particular goal is looking at the further collaboration between the preschool and the grammar school. She said beyond that, we do have the same town-wide problem that there are not enough of Coventry children in preschool, but we are no longer investigating an expansionary plan.

D. Information: 2008-09 Advanced Placement Presentation – Mr. Hopkins

Dr. Bernard said we are very pleased with the first year of progress. She introduced Mr. Hopkins. Mr. Hopkins said he hopes tonight to share what the vision is for the program. He began with a video about the Advanced Placement program in general. When the video was complete, Mr. Hopkins reviewed a PowerPoint presentation, which showed Coventry’s Advanced Placement program in more detail.

C. Trudon asked if there are minimum requirements for the Saturday tutorial sessions; specifically if there is a student who is involved in sports, etc. Ms. Trask replied saying there are additional ways for those students to seek help. She said the school is required to offer the Saturday sessions, but the students are not required to attend those specifically.

R. Williams said it is nice to see us doing something so focused for underserved students. He asked if any of this came under special education. Ms. Richard said no. R. Williams asked what the class size was. Mr. Hopkins said it varies depending on the number of sections to the number of students who signed up. R. Williams asked what the ideal class size would be, in English as an example. Ms. Trask said 22 or 23 is doable. R. Williams asked if any of the classes that are being taught could be taken online. Mr. Hopkins said there are some that are offered online, but the students would not receive the support needed from the teacher in the classroom.

M. Kortmann asked if UCONN courses are still offered. Mr. Hopkins said yes. Ms. Trask said our juniors are competing with some college seniors. She said we are a bit ahead of the curve.

J. Barrett said the program sounds great. He said the teachers are getting a lot of training and then are teaching non-AP classes as well. He asked if there are plans to officially incorporate that training and teaching into non-AP teaching. Mrs. Trask said as the curriculum gets upgraded it happens during that process. J. Barrett asked what grade levels are participating in the AP classes. Mr. Hopkins said mostly juniors and seniors. Ms. Trask added when the grant ends, CHS could run the program without it;

ways can be found to get staff trained. She said the opportunity is an invaluable shot in the arm and lets the students know they can do it. J. Barrett asked who the funding source was for the CBIA grant. Mr. Hopkins said the main source is Exxon/Mobil. J. Barrett said the total is \$465K for the five years of the grant and asked how much will be spent each year. Mr. Hopkins said the amounts increase year by year to equal the full amount in the end.

Dr. Bernard said the fact that we have this grant can lead to other grants.

C. Trudon said there was a lawsuit pending regarding the performance based pay portion of the grant and she asked if it was settled yet. L. Pietrantonio said everyone in the state is waiting to see what will happen with the Stamford case.

J. Barrett suggested that a letter should be written to Exxon/Mobil thanking them for this opportunity.

E. H1N1 and School Sites as Vaccination Locations

Dr. Bernard commented on the information included in the Board packet on H1N1. In addition she handed out the proposed H1N1 Planning Team for Coventry. She said there are conflicting standards across the nation as to who will provide the vaccination locations. She thanked Mr. Petrone for attending a state conference just today on H1N1. She said it is preferable by the schools that families handle vaccinations with their family doctors and such. She finished by saying the planning team is scheduled to meet and the recommendation is to keep schools up and running and to keep sick children at home until they are better.

VI. REPORT OF CHAIRMAN

L. Pietrantonio noted that the Executive Session is scheduled to address the EASTCONN program and associated lease and that is why the vote is scheduled for after the executive session. He continued saying the bus route issue would be addressed by Sherry Holmes as the transportation director and she would get back to those parents.

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

VOTE: Approve minutes of August 27, 2009

MOTION: To approve the minutes of August 27, 2009

By: C. Trudon

Seconded: M. Kortmann

Regarding page 2, under Report of Chairman, second sentence, K. Ryan asked that the words "for the roof project" be added.

Regarding page 2, third paragraph, line nine, M. Kortmann asked that the word "ago" be added after the word "long."

Regarding page 5, third paragraph, first sentence, K. Ryan asked that the word "were" be changed to "was."

Regarding page 5, second paragraph, fourth line, M. Kortmann asked that the word "probably" be added after the word "money."

Result: Motion to approve the minutes with noted changes passes unanimously.

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. VOTE: Approve CHS October 2009 Field Experience to Vermont

MOTION: To Approve CHS October 2009 Field Experience to Vermont
By: M. Kortmann Seconded: C. Trudon

K. Ryan asked why this particular site. Mr. Hopkins said it was an outside adventure club and it fits with the objectives of the club. Mr. Hopkins said all students are active members of the Nomad club.

Result: Motion passes unanimously.

B. VOTE: Approve CHS April 2010 Field Experience to Virginia

MOTION: To Approve CHS April 2010 Field Experience to Virginia
By: K. Ryan Seconded: C. Trudon

R. Williams asked if it takes place during school. Mrs. Bittner said it takes place Thursday through Sunday, so children will miss two days of school. She said the reason for this is because other trips were taking place during the school break. R. Williams asked what the festival was. Ms. Bittner said it is a competition and a clinic is also provided. She said last year we received a gold medal. Dr. Bernard said it upgrades the level of student musical performance.

C. Trudon asked if the number of students has been consistent. She asked if the cost is a deterrent. Ms. Bittner said there are many fundraisers and she doesn't believe it is a deterrent.

R. Williams asked if they take more than one trip a year. Ms. Bittner said they travel and do a four day trip every other year. R. Williams asked if they have begun fundraising. Ms. Bittner said yes, some have money left from last year. Ms. Bittner said there is also a parent organization that raises money throughout the year to help students who may not be able to afford the trip. R. Williams asked if substitutes would be needed. Ms. Bittner said most likely yes.

Result: Motion passes unanimously.

XI. REPORT OF BOARD MEMBERS

Information: Roof Report – L. Pietrantonio

L. Pietrantonio handed out a copy of the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) ad. He said it will probably go in the paper next weekend. He reviewed the RFQ. He said the date needs to be established, which is usually 3 – 4 weeks out.

C. Trudon asked if “flat roof” needs to be clarified. L. Pietrantonio said no, not at this time. He said there is no bid work at this time; the professionals involved will know for what they are submitting qualifications.

J. Barrett asked if the Board needed to vote. L. Pietrantonio said a consensus is fine. L. Pietrantonio asked if there was a consensus; the group gave consensus.

J. Barrett asked if we needed to pass it through for legal review. L. Pietrantonio said it is a stock RFQ.

DRAFT
Coventry Public Schools
Superintendent of Schools
Long-term Goals and Annual Objectives
September 10, 2009

1. Improve outside resources, partnerships, and revenues, consistent with district goals.
 - 1.1 Expand the implementation of Coventry High School's Project Opening Doors.
 - 1.2 Collaborate additionally with Police, Fire, and Town agencies to improve our emergency responsiveness.
 - 1.3 Collaborate with EASTCONN, the State Department of Education's agency, in improving student achievement on district assessments (CALJ).
 - 1.4 Use American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) stimulus funds to develop programs and training to assist students with autism spectrum disorders and related special needs.
 - 1.5 Work with outside agencies including the town to address preschool student needs and program development.
 - 1.6 Collaborate with outside safety compliance resources, including the National Incident Management System (NIMS), to ensure that critical safety procedures are developed and followed.
 - 1.7 Initiate student services with Lincoln Academy to better provide for special needs students.
 - 1.8 Share information regarding the district's strategic plan for increasing efficiencies, including presenting a seminar at the CABE/CAPSS Convention.
 - 1.9 Train staff to interrelate with an ever increasing number of outside compliance agencies.
 - 1.10 Work in collaboration with a complexity of medical agencies in preparation for H1N1.
2. Promote efficient functioning and consistent refinement of subsystems within the larger organization.
 - 2.1 Analyze Effective Schools survey results by building and make relevant recommendations.
 - 2.2 Implement redesigned Food Service operations to improve quality and reduce costs.
 - 2.3 Improve substitute teacher orientation and training procedures.
 - 2.4 Implement grades 6-12 schedule coordination and redesign.
 - 2.5 Implement processes and practices that further increase academic achievement.
 - 2.6 Implement refinements in the Strategies that Get Results (SGR) focus including the Response to Intervention (RtI) programmatic improvements.

- 2.7 Increase utility use efficiencies.
- 2.8 Improve and expand environmentally friendly "green" activities.

3. Provide clear and regular communication to all constituencies, building a support base for school programs.

- 3.1 Further the collaboration between town Finance and school Fiscal committees.
- 3.2 Expand Board and public information regarding department and school goal achievement.
- 3.3 Present staff evaluation procedures to the Board.
- 3.4 Ensure that the town has facilities' needs information.
- 3.5 Continue development of our user-friendly district website, including parent information regarding website resources and e-mail response options.
- 3.6 Expand school programs and opportunities serving as resources for parents.
- 3.7 Improve public information regarding school budgets and financial transactions.
- 3.8 Improve parent information regarding student progress by implementing Mygradebook.com.
- 3.9 Improve timely notices to parents by implementing Alertnow.com.
- 3.10 Provide family seminars to assist with child development.

4. Implement programs and practices that improve student educational performance, ensuring that such practices align with state standards.

- 4.1 Implement Response to Intervention (RtI) programmatic improvements.
- 4.2 Implement revised world language program at the Capt. Nathan Hale School.
- 4.3 Improve the use of site data teams in modifying programs as connected to results.
- 4.4 Expand efforts in academic rigor including programs such as Future Problem Solvers.
- 4.5 Increase development, monitoring and the student achievement results of our Academic Assist Programs.
- 4.6 Provide more program alternatives for students, including online coursework and distance learning opportunities.
- 4.7 Refine the web based IEP and pilot RtI Direct programs in order to effectuate efficiencies within educational programs.

- 4.8 Continue to improve curriculum alignment coordination between classroom offerings, grades and departments, and state standards through A Balanced Curriculum program.
- 4.9 Increase transition efforts between schools (Pre-K to K, 2nd to 3rd, 5th to 6th, and 8th to 9th) in order to enhance resource utilization and student achievement.
- 4.10 Implement gifted education refinement initiatives, including fifth grade assessments.
- 4.11 Implement new Connecticut Department of Education Learning Disability guidelines.
- 5. Improve the implementation and use of educational and administrative technology systems.**
 - 5.1 Increase the integration of curricular technology projects and district technology support systems.
 - 5.2 Implement three-year Technology Plan to begin in the 2009-2010 school year.
 - 5.3 Improve computer access for grades K-5 students, including the development of computer lab programs at the Coventry Grammar School.
 - 5.4 Increase efficiencies and hold rising costs through a newly developed transportation bid package.
 - 5.5 Further develop Disaster Recovery systems to back up district software.
 - 5.6 Increase the implementation and the integration of curricular technology projects and district technology support systems.
 - 5.7 Increase the use of instructional technology, including computer labs, in classroom technology, and smart boards, in order to enhance student achievement.
 - 5.8 Implement new student portfolio system at Coventry High School that is more consistent with expectations for student learning.
 - 5.9 Use technology developed data to track and be better informed regarding utility and facility expenses and usage.