

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 12, 2014**

A special meeting of the Enfield Board of Education was held at Henry Barnard Elementary School in the Board Conference Room, located at 27 Shaker Road, Enfield, CT on February 12, 2014.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM by Chairman Sirard.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Chairman Sirard

3. **FIRE EVACUATION ANNOUNCEMENT:** Chairman Sirard announced the fire evacuation announcement.

4. **ROLL CALL:**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Peter Jonaitis, Lori Unghire (arrived at 7:15 PM), David Wawer (arrived at 8:03 PM), Vin Grady, Tina LeBlanc (participated remotely), Timothy Neville, Stacy Thurston and Tom Sirard

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Dr. Jeffrey Schumann, Superintendent and Mr. Christopher Drezek, Deputy Superintendent

5. **Continue the 2014-15 Budget Discussion**

Chairman Sirard stated we are here to discuss the FY2014-15 Budget. The superintendent presented his proposed budget recommendations to the Board. The Board needs to review the recommendations and approve a budget to submit to the Town.

Dr. Schumann reviewed his proposed budget recommendations with Board members.

Mr. Neville added that we will need to assess the needs regarding teacher evaluations. Can we get another extension for implementing the evaluations for the elementary teachers?

Dr. Schumann stated that we have asked the Commissioner of Education for an extension for another year. The test from the State is not ready yet. The data taken now is going to be used for growth and will give us a base line for testing in 2015-16. They are making some changes to the assessments to one formal evaluation and 3 informal evaluations. This might save an evaluator 30-40 hours. The problem with this is the formal conversation with the teacher will not happen every year.

Mr. Neville is concerned with the way they are implementing this. After discussing this with our representatives, do you see any changes that may be forthcoming?

Dr. Schumann added that our legislators are in agreement with us regarding the teacher evaluations and the amount of time that is needed by the evaluators. He has asked them to bring our concerns forward.

Mr. Peabody stated the evaluation process is tough. From a budget point, our constituents will pressure us to not increase administrative staff due to the decline in student enrollment. We still need to respond to this mandate. Can anyone else help us with this? Can we use outside resources and head teachers to evaluation staff?

Dr. Schumann we are looking at this closely. Any budget increase creates problems. There are some options that are available for us to use. Department chairs can work under a different certification and we can use complementary evaluators. We will need to look at our ESAA collective bargaining unit to avoid any violations.

Mr. Jonaitis asked why we can't use department chairs to conduct evaluations.

Dr. Schumann stated we declare to the State each year what certifications each teacher will work under. Evaluators will need to work under an 092 certification which falls under the Administrators contract.

Chairman Sirard added the pay scale will be different for an 092 certification. Mr. Neville added they can work under an 105 or 092 certification as a department chair.

Mr. Peabody would like us to get a clarification from the State regarding this so we will know what our options are.

Mr. Neville stated you would be working with two different unions and this would create a change in working conditions.

Mrs. Unghire arrived at 7:17 PM.

Mr. Jonaitis asked if they could do part of the evaluation. Mr. Neville stated that is not how the evaluations are supposed to work.

Mr. Jonaitis would like us to discuss this with the Administrators during the contract negotiations.

Mr. Grady stated we would use the teachers with an 092 certification to do part of the evaluations and then have the Administrators complete the evaluation process. Wouldn't this mess up the evaluation process?

Dr. Schumann stated what Mr. Jonaitis is discussing is how this used to be done in the past but it is not okay to do it this way now. The rules have changed.

Chairman Sirard stated the new process is for administrators to evaluate teachers and if we do not comply with this mandate we are threatening our State funding. Teachers cannot evaluate teachers.

Mr. Neville stated complimentary evaluators can be used part time. Other districts are dealing with the same situation. Can we share evaluators with other districts? We can use retired administrators and possibly come up with a different classification for the complimentary evaluators. He does not believe the ESAA would have a problem this. Our administrators are burdened now.

Mr. Peabody added that he previously discussed this concept with Dr. Schumann using regionally a group of complementary evaluators. This is a viable option to look into. It would give us some breathing room.

Dr. Schumann stated we are going into negotiations with the ESAA and this would be a good time to bring up this item up. He expected the Board to take the 7 assistant principals from the proposed budget. We will need some time to figure some of these items out. We need to see what the legislators will do.

Mr. Grady stated you will still need part of the \$600K for outside complementary evaluator help. Dr. Schumann stated we will look for something that would be cost neutral.

Mr. Jonaitis stated using someone at \$25 per hour for 500 hours for 14 weeks you are looking at \$12,500. This is not a bad amount for a part time job.

Mr. Neville stated the legislators will not move quickly regarding this. This will get done at the end of our budget cycle. We need to look at how many hours are needed for the complementary evaluators.

Mr. Jonaitis added that retired administrators can only work so many days.

Dr. Schumann added that he and Mr. Drezek have discussed this. We need to look at what it would like using a complementary evaluator would look like. This would be labor intensive at certain times. We need to see what a reasonable stipend would be.

Mr. Peabody stated we are dealing with this mandate. We need to get the word out to the community about this State mandate and what we are up against. This would be a good thing to do.

Dr. Schumann stated the elementary buildings have 40-60 adults in a building. Principals are being spread thin and we are adding on more and more to their plates. Their focus is on many different things. He knows what it is like in our office. Many different things are going on besides teaching and learning. The principals are dealing with multiple issues that keep them from doing the good work that is needed.

Mr. Sirard stated we will need to be careful when it comes to hiring complementary evaluators. They will qualify for unemployment benefits. We will be looking at our Administrators contract. Salary and benefits have always been our responsibility. This will drive our budget higher. We are maxed out financially. Our fiscal responsibility has not changed.

Mr. Peabody stated we need to avoid some cost issues if hiring is feasible. If we hire 7 assistant principals over the long term, this may be more cost effective than using complementary evaluators.

Mr. Neville stated we have made a dent in the direction we are going. By hiring full time employees they will be ours for a long period. We need to look at what is actually needed. Using complementary evaluators is a cost effective way. Every district in the state is looking at this. Using retired employees is a good idea. He feels this is a win win and eventually we will see a decrease in this process. He also feels the union would be willing to look at this.

Mr. Jonaitis stated that he does not care that the elementary principals do not have enough time. The teachers are doing just as much if not more. They are doing everything but teaching in the classroom. He feels we should bring back the 9 department chairs and talk to the unions about this by creating another structure with the union.

Dr. Schumann stated we cannot discuss negotiation strategies now during budget discussions.

Mr. Peabody stated we are looking to add evaluations without the support structure that is needed. Quality of life is needed. We need to look at the evaluations, the extra work and maintain quality of life.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated the State is requiring an 092 administrator certification in order to evaluate teachers. Just because you have an 092 certification it does not mean that you are an administrator. We have combined department heads and they are also struggling.

Department heads are not administrators and cannot be used as evaluators.

Mr. Jonaitis stated they could do evaluations under the certification they have and they would also teach during the day.

Chairman Sirard stated they cannot do both under the mandate.

Dr. Schumann stated the department heads teach 5 periods during the day.

Mr. Neville stated the State has defined this. We should explore complimentary evaluators. This will require training. We could do this with other towns possibly. He would like us to check with our Board attorney regarding this. We do not want to cross any lines.

Mr. Peabody asked if training is needed, is there a train the trainer we can use? Dr. Schumann stated yes. A calibration and rubric will be used for continuity.

Mr. Peabody stated this discussion has been fantastic. We will look into the complementary evaluator process of pros and cons. We are not taking the 7 assistant principals off at this time because our hands are still somewhat tied by the State.

Chairman Sirard stated the problem is the budget process itself. The State will not act until we have already set our budget. We set our budget and then the Town will set their budget. The State will set their budget and the Federal Government will then set their budget. This process is backwards. By the time the legislators get to this topic, we will be put into a situation where the principals will do the evaluations. He is not comfortable asking the Town Council for 6.94% increase.

Mr. Neville agrees with Chairman Sirard. Where are we going to make the cuts from? If we cut half of the assistant principals as a hypothetical, the Town Council will see what we need. We are always dealing with what we get.

Mrs. Thurston asked Dr. Schumann what you would do without the 7 assistant principals. What number would you need and where would you use them?

Dr. Schumann stated he would use them at the intermediate level.

Mrs. Thurston stated adding 7 assistant principals would shock anyone. Do we have an option to cut this back?

Chairman Sirard does not want us to take the focus off of what the problem really is. This is a State created issue that we must deal with. He does not want to see this turn into a battle between the Town and the Board. We raised taxes in Enfield. He has a problem with this because it is still an experiment. We are implementing programs that are not fully developed.

Mr. Jonaitis would like the Board to work on passing a budget that this town can afford. We need to find a way to alleviate the need for hiring 7 assistant principals. By not including them in the budget, we will send a message back to the State saying that we cannot afford this. He believes many other towns would follow us. If this means we will not get State aide, then so be it.

Mr. Neville stated we are not the fiscal authority. Our responsibility is to present the needs of the district to the Town Council. Last year we were very candid with the Town Council regarding our needs. We had honest discussions and we presented our needs. We need to present the Town Council our needs. The Board agrees if the State gives a mandate, they should fund it. He agrees with evaluations but not the way they are presenting it.

Mr. Neville stated you mentioned a 6.94% budget. The increase should be 4.98%. Chairman Sirard stated you are correct. The amount he mentioned is incorrect.

Mr. Neville asked what percentage is needed for the 7 elementary assistant principals. Dr. Schumann stated it is 1% or \$674K. If we cut the 7 elementary assistant principals in half, we are looking at 4.5%.

Mrs. LeBlanc agreed with Mr. Neville reducing the elementary principals in half would bring us to 4.5%. She would like to see what our budget would look like if we left it as status quo with our contractual obligations. Then show the increases for the additional positions.

Dr. Schumann stated that would be 4.55%. This percentage would be without any retirement adjustments.

Chairman Sirard stated Mrs. LeBlanc would like to know what the budget would look like to maintain what we currently have including the retirements.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated this would be helpful to see what we have. It will give more clarity to the new Board members.

Mr. Jonaitis asked how many retirement notices have we received. Dr. Schumann stated we have received 20 retirement letters and several have asked for extensions. Some of the retirees will not qualify for payouts. Some are still on the fence about retiring. The deadline was February 11, 2014.

Mr. Neville would like to see these numbers up on the screen. He would like to see the numbers and the percentages. He would like this for future meetings.

Chairman Sirard agrees. This is our first budget meeting with the administration and it gives us a chance to discuss what we would like to see for future meetings. This gives them some direction for our next meeting. He is confident that we can come up with a decent budget.

Mr. Peabody would like to see a column for the original proposal and the past years in a spread sheet.

Mr. Grady stated we made some positive moves for the district with last year's budget. He does not want to see us go backwards. We are marketing our school system and are going up against the magnet schools. He wants us to continue with our positive proactive approach. If we go backwards we will lose more kids to magnet schools.

Mrs. LeBlanc would like to see what status quo will be. This does not mean this is what she wants. This will help if we are going to make any cuts – they will be very visible.

Chairman Sirard stated we are all in agreement with what you are saying.

Mr. Neville stated last year we came to a needs budget. This process is an educational process. We need to let the public know what the value and needs are. He agrees with Mrs. LeBlanc. He would like to see the differences from last year's budget compared to this year's budget. Linking the budget to our priorities and goals is a good idea.

Mr. Peabody stated it is important to have a baseline.

Mr. Jonaitis stated that we need to look at the town as a whole and to provide the best education we can afford. We need to look at the bottom line. He has not heard anything yet

about cutting any programs. We could improve on so many areas and do more but it will cost. You can't have what you can't afford. He would rather spend the 1% on the students instead of adding administrators. We need to watch what we are spending our money on. We are Enfield, Connecticut not Farmington and Simsbury.

Chairman Sirard stated outside of our salary obligations we have two areas that are constantly increasing – IT costs and SPED costs. We need to look at these two areas. He was told that if we moved the administration to Alcorn we would save money. SPED services need to be reviewed. All of this drives the costs up every year.

Chairman Sirard stated we have IT personnel in both buildings and if we were housed at Alcorn we would not need as many IT liaisons. He was told we could save some money with personnel. IT is a major whole in our budget.

Mr. Neville stated we have 2 IT people that are working on BOE issues all the time. They would be full time working on these issues no matter where they were located. Before, we would need to go back and forth to the Town to resolve issues. These two employees are dedicated to working on our issues. We are more efficient now than before.

Mr. Neville agrees with Chairman Sirard regarding SPED costs. We do not want to cut any of the services that our students are receiving. We need to look at the most efficient way of providing these services. We previously discussed an audit of the services was needed.

Mr. Peabody asked if IT charges us for the services they provide and are they fully loaded or is it a billable rate for the time used? We are paying for their vacation and sick time. He would like to see more information on this.

Mr. Peabody asked about combining HR departments with the Town. Board of Education employees are still Town employees.

Dr. Schumann stated our HR department is more specialized than the Town's. The Town cannot take over our HR department. A certain certification is needed for our HR department.

Mr. Jonaitis believes we are going in two different directions with using Mac's instead of pc's in our schools.

Mr. Neville stated the Town started using Mac's with their people first.

Mr. Jonaitis stated we just ordered 175 new Mac's. We could have purchased 400 windows for the same amount.

Dr. Schumann stated we received a grant to purchase the iMac's. These will run more cost effective than the pc's. The new iMac's will be used for testing students.

Mr. Neville added that we will get 3 years from a pc and will get much more from the Mac's. The other item is we do not need license agreements for them.

Mr. Peabody stated what we might save in hardware we would lose in software. Mr. Neville agreed. Mr. Peabody added that is the bottom line – cost savings.

Mr. Wawer stated that other towns are using windows based pc's and most businesses use pc's. We should train our students to use windows based technology.

Dr. Schumann stated he has an iMac on his desk and he uses a windows program. The cost for the program was \$69. He can run anything on windows.

Mr. Peabody stated in the business world you need to be able to use excel, word, power point and access. If you are a programmer you will use another type of program. Licenses will cost you more down the road than hardware will.

Mr. Jonaitis stated the entire State will be using apple products? Mr. Peabody stated no, it is cost effective to use Mac's.

Chairman Sirard stated these are some of the significant drivers to our budget – IT and SPED costs. Efficiencies can be found and we should look here.

Mr. Neville stated we should look for long term efficiencies. He would like the Superintendent to get the projected enrollment and class size matrices for the Board to look at. Magnet school numbers is another big concern.

Mrs. Unghire asked about the students that go to CREC magnet schools. When they come back to us, do we get the money back or does it stay there.

Mr. Neville stated we do not get any of the money back.

Mr. Wawer stated this is wrong. We should have our representatives address this and change it. Our families are being disadvantaged. Do we pay for Cheney tech students to attend? Mr. Neville stated we pay for transportation. Mr. Wawer stated this should be the same system for the CREC magnet schools.

Chairman Sirard asked how many students return back to us from magnet schools. Mrs. Zalucki stated around 10-20 students return from magnet schools.

Chairman Sirard stated that Mrs. Unghire asked if we lose a certain amount of students to CREC are we required by law to pay for their tuition out of Board of Education money. Some of the students return back to us after October 1st and we lose this money. The tuition stays with the school.

Mr. Neville stated Mrs. Zalucki can answer this. Mrs. Zalucki stated that she has contacted them within 2-3 weeks from October 1st when students have returned back to us. They will prorate the cost and will bill us accordingly.

Mr. Neville asked how much is the tuition for the magnet schools? Mrs. Zalucki stated the cost will vary from magnet school to magnet school.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated MLC is one of the more successful magnet schools. A lot of students come back from PSA because it is not what they thought it would be. Some of the magnet schools are more successful than others and they have many new magnet schools popping up all the time.

Mr. Peabody would like us to draft a letter to our representatives asking them to support the State funding magnet school tuitions instead of the Towns. Examples of an unfair advantage would be the advertising they are currently using. Advertising is not cheap – where is this money coming from.

Chairman Sirard stated we can add this to our regular meeting agenda. We need to focus on the budget discussion.

Mr. Neville is concerned about the way the funding for the magnet schools is done.

Mr. Wawer agrees with Mr. Neville. If a student wants to attend a magnet school, that is their choice. It should be paid for by the people that created the magnet school. Just like Suffield Academy, Loomis Chaffee, Prince Tech and Cheney Tech. We should not carry the burden. This creates an unfair economic disadvantage to our families.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated if a family wants to send their child to a magnet school, they should be responsible for the commitment and if they come back to us, they should be required to pay the difference. Magnet students come back to us throughout the entire school year.

Mrs. LeBlanc also added that if there is a discipline issue with any of the Enfield students attending the magnet schools, we are responsible for them. Mr. Neville added this is correct.

Chairman Sirard asked the Board if they have any other questions for Dr. Schumann regarding the budget.

Mr. Peabody would like information about our technology plan and software. Do we have a proactive plan so we are not playing catch-up?

Dr. Schumann stated Mr. Bourassa has negotiated multiple year contracts saving us money. The IT budget is very complex. He will put something together for the Board. He meets with the IT group monthly and reviews items.

Mr. Wawer asked for clarification regarding the economic justification for FTE Hours. The amount jumped (page 11) from 2013-14 to 2014-15. There was an increase at C/O.

Chairman Sirard stated the student-to-teacher ratio are spread throughout the district. You will not get an accurate number.

Mr. Peabody would like details from Munis to see the different scenarios. Maybe this budget cycle is not the time to ask for this. If we are adding or subtracting you can see the difference and impact would be.

Dr. Schumann stated Munis will not allow us to do many different things. We have done reports our own way and he will bring this for the Board to see.

Mr. Neville would like to see where the cost savings would be for benefits.

Mr. Wawer stated the retirees are retiring at the highest amounts. He would like to know the cost avoidance savings for retirees. Will they be replaced or reduced.

Mr. Neville stated we will not know who we will be hiring at this time. Different positions are hard to find and we may need to pay for a more experienced person.

Mr. Wawer asked for clarification (page 66) regarding curriculum administration. Dr. Schumann stated we added 2 curriculum coordinators.

Mr. Jonaitis stated these are the people that are doing evaluations. Dr. Schumann stated the two curriculum coordinators are conducting evaluations.

Mr. Wawer asked for clarification regarding professional development increase. Dr. Schumann stated the 2013 numbers were spread out to several different buildings. We put them all in one location to manage the budget better. He knows that the STEAM initiative is one of the contributing factors. He will need to look into this more.

Mr. Wawer asked for clarification regarding the elementary instructional supplies. Dr.

Schumann stated we brought all the numbers back to a central location to have better control. There are still some funds available at the building levels for instructional supplies. Mr. Wawer would be curious to find out what the building level amounts total up to for instructional supplies in 2013, 2014 and 2015. What are the savings to bringing this back to one location.

Mr. Peabody asked about secretarial staff stuffing envelopes. This could be a way to save some time and money by having a centralized mailing station.

Mr. Wawer asked about FTE head counts. You can do a lot with technology.

Mr. Peabody stated technology allows us to do more with less personnel. He is not saying to cut personnel. A good administrative secretarial employee is worth their weight in precious metals. He is looking for efficiencies like a centralized mailing station. He is looking for cost avoidances.

Mr. Neville stated as a former principal, he was always looking for efficiencies. There are some things that need to be mailed like report cards, progress reports and confidential items. By law we must mail out certain items. He is all for efficiencies.

Mr. Peabody added by giving them the necessary tools, we can make some additional efficiencies.

Mr. Wawer asked under Districtwide Administration category, what positions are mandated by the State Statute besides the superintendent? He asked if we need a Business Manager.

Mr. Drezek stated some of the retirement replacements will be harder to fill the longer we wait and the longer we wait the more it will cost us. In the past, the Board has given me permission to fill some of these hard to fill positions. When we go to the college fairs where the newly graduating students are looking for jobs, he has gone there with contracts trying to get the best qualified person at the lowest amounts. He just wants the Board to be aware of this.

Mr. Wawer stated 50% of college graduates are unemployed. This would mean there is a pool out there we could target.

Dr. Schumann stated certain certifications like physics will get hired quickly. You must hire a Superintendent. Your Business Manager needs to have an 085 certification. You are only required to hire a superintendent.

6. Adjournment

Mr. Grady moved, seconded by Mr. Peabody to adjourn the Special Meeting of February 12, 2014.

All ayes, motion passed unanimously.

Meeting stood adjourned at 8:46 PM.

Vincent M. Grady
Secretary
Board of Education

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Zalucki, Recording Secretary