

STONINGTON BOARD OF ED COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES May 27, 2021

Frank Todisco, Board Chairman called the special meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. in the District Office Board of Education Room. Members present were Heidi Simmons, Board of Ed Secretary, Gordon Lord, Craig Esposito, Jack Morehouse, and Alisa Morrison. Member Absent: Farouk Rajab. Also present were, Ana de Oliveira, Recording Secretary, Dr. Van Riley, Superintendent and Mary Anne Butler, Assistant Superintendent.

Review Policy 4118.31 Reports of Suspected Abuse or Neglect of Children or Reports of Sexual Assault of Students by School Employees - Mary Anne Butler, Assistant Superintendent noted this is a new policy. She is also working with Allison Van Etten, Director of Special Services to create an on line handbook with these types of policies for staff. Ms. Van Etten will be pushing out an email with mandated reporter training for Board members to also take part in, similar to what current employees take part in. The Board had no questions regarding the policy. Chairman Frank Todisco summarized by stating that the Board will complete the online training before the June Board of Ed meeting.

2020-21 School Calendar/Wednesday Schedule Change - Dr. Riley explained that teachers have requested to have professional development days up front on the school calendar. He also brought forward his recommendation to have a modified schedule on Wednesdays while maintaining as much instructional time as possible so that teachers have time to meet with social workers and staff to talk about and identify student needs. Dr. Riley also recommended changing the first day of school for the 2021-2022 school year to September 8th instead of the 7th in order to observe Rosh Hashanah. He explained we usually do not observe this holiday but it would fall on the first day of school this year and in trying to have all students in class on the first day, his suggestion is to use September 7th as a professional development day instead. Dr. Riley noted he will bring back a revised 2021-22 calendar with both the Wednesday and first day of school changes to the June 10th Regular Board meeting. Gordon Lord asked how many professional development days we currently have and will the additional days be used for the mental health team to report on students. Dr. Riley noted there are a total of five days and yes they will be used for identifying student needs. We have three up front and the remainder throughout the year. Dr. Riley noted we have 900 hours of instruction time per year, we all want to make sure we have classroom time and do not want to sacrifice that. Mr. Lord spoke on the number of early release days on the school calendar. Dr. Riley noted he has spoken to Heather Somers regarding the virtual option for the fall but was told that more guidance will be forthcoming. Alisa Morrison commented on professional development days and noted these were intended to be used for workshops and speakers. Mary Anne Butler, Assistant Superintendent explained that EASTCONN holds professional development throughout the year for staff. Craig Esposito explained what LEARN is currently doing in regards to professional development. Mr. Lord spoke on the scheduling and timing of additional early release days. Jack Morehouse asked if there will be an option to go virtual on snow days going forward. Dr. Riley agreed with virtual snow days but there are no parameters from the state currently that will allow that. Mr. Lord noted that kids look forward to the snow days and feels we don't need to do all the snow days virtual. Dr. Riley commented that the Technology Team have one to one chrome books ready for virtual snow days. He noted that we have also been talking to the BEARS council about students that need to quarantine and would have the capability to do remote for those students. Chairman Todisco noted that the Board is supportive of changing the first day of school and would like Dr. Riley to bring back the Wednesday recommendation to the Board.

Review of Bylaws: 9130, 9131, 9132/9133, 9140, 9150, 9210, 9214, 9221, 9222, 9230 and elimination of 9120 and 9160 - Chairman Todisco noted that the only Bylaw that will not be discussed tonight is Bylaw 9230 which will be tabled for discussion at this time. He noted that all recommendations for the Bylaws were linked to the agenda. The Board and Ms. Butler discussed changes, recommendations and updates to each of the Bylaws.

Heidi Simmons voiced her ask of forming an athletic committee and asked when that could be started. Chairman Todisco noted he will add this idea to an upcoming meeting as the start of the school year gets closer. Gordon Lord suggested adding this topic to the Board's retreat meeting and also a review the number of committees that we currently have. Alisa Morrison shared the function of the past athletic committee.

Future Agenda Items

Jack Morehouse had questions regarding when the elementary and middle school music curriculum would be discussed. Mary Anne Butler will be getting back to Mr. Morehouse with exact dates.

Executive Closed Session: Superintendent Dr. Van Riley's Evaluation

The Board of Education entered into Executive Session at 8:07p.m.

The following motion was made by Craig Esposito and seconded by Alisa Morrison:

Motion 1: To enter into closed executive session to discuss the Superintendent's Evaluation and invite Dr. Riley to be a part of that.

All: Aye

The Board exited executive session at 8:28p.m.

Frank Todisco, Board Chairman noted there was no action taken during the executive session.

Adjournment

The following motion was made by Craig Esposito and seconded by Alisa Morrison:

Motion 2: To adjourn at 8:29p.m.

All: Aye

Heidi Simmons, Board Secretary