

The Regular Meeting of the Regional School District 14 Board of Education was held January 22, 2019 at Bethlehem Elementary School Cafeteria, 92 East Street, Bethlehem, CT.

Present: Janet Morgan, Mike Devine, Maryanne Van Aken, Dave Lampart, George Bauer, John Chapman. Also in attendance were Superintendent Dr. Olzacki, Michael Rafferty, Wayne McAllister, Alyce Misuraca Wendy Yatsenick, BES student reps Emily Thompson and August McLeran along with their parents, Thomas Brayton, approximately 4 community members, and BOE clerk, Natascha Schwartz

Pam Zmek arrived at 7:02pm and Carol Ann Brown called in via teleconference.

1. Call to Order

Ms. Morgan called the meeting to order at 7:00pm and led the pledge of allegiance.

2. Approval of Minutes:

Ms. Van Aken motioned to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 7, 2019 and seconded by Mr. Lampart. The motion carried 6-0-1, with John Chapman abstaining.

Student Representatives:

Emily Thompson & August McLeran shared with the BOE members all of the great things have been happening at BES. Emily advised that BES has been building a culture of kindness and empathy by helping students understand that everyone is special and unique in their own way. She went on to mention that all classes participated in a shared reading experience of the book, *How full is your bucket*, which teaches that everyone needs to help in order to build a positive community with bucket-filling behaviors. They've also worked on a school-wide project to build skills in empathy using visual arts and writing. Each student was asked to interview a classmate to capture a few facts on what makes that person unique and special. In art class, students were engaged in learning about portraits and created a portrait of their classmate. Emily advised the BOE members that as they leave the building, to take a look on the walls and read about the Grade 3 students. She thanked the PTO for providing frames for the portraits and mentioned that in the coming days, all grade levels will be displayed throughout the building.

August was excited to announce that BES has been blinded by science with the new science curriculum being implemented and the addition of a science lab. He went on to advise that students are engaging in investigations around various phenomena and are building critical thinking skills, collaborating, communicating, creating, and problem solving. Some topics which they have started to explore are sound and vibrations, forces in motion, matter and its interaction, and Earth's place in the universe.

In grades K -2, students are sharpening their "super reading powers" in reader's workshop and earned their "reading capes" by practicing power, sight word power, partner power, and book talk power as they grow to be powerful readers. In Kindergarten Math, students have been busy using bead frames as a way to learn and building number sense for numbers up to 10. Grade 1 students are learning about the world around them and in Math, they are learning geometry and are composing and decomposing shapes. Grade 2 students visited the post office to learn how the mail connects their community to the larger world. Each student also wrote a letter to a special person and walked to the post office to mail it. While at the post office, they learned about how the mail is delivered. In grade 2 Science, they are using magnifying glasses to observe random objects' color, texture, shape, etc. Their favorite object was sandpaper and had a wonderful discussion about it.

Grade 3 students are wrapping up their nonfiction reading/ writing units and learned the importance of a strong introduction to hook the reader and mastering the art of note taking using boxes or bulleted lists. In Math, students are working on place value, the power of 10, and multiplication. They have also been strong role models to their Kindergarten buddies and visit them monthly to spend time learning together.

Grade 4 students investigated a crime scene to launch their mystery reading unit in readers' workshop. They had to use evidence to determine whether Humpty Dumpty fell off the wall or if he was pushed. Theories range from Jack and Jill accidentally knocking him off the wall with their water bucket, to the baker pushing him so that he could use the egg for his delicious cakes. Also in writing, they are working on thesis statements and how to defend them. They are practicing to organize thoughts into reasons with details to support their thinking and attempting to convince an audience of their own personal thesis statements. In Math, they are using area models to multiply multi-digit numbers.

Grade 5 students interviewed staff members and wrote non-fiction feature articles based on school related topics. In Math, they have completed problems solving posters and gallery walks to provide feedback on strategies used around decimal place value. In Science, they conducted several experiments based on Earth's rotation and explored reasons for change of seasons, night/day, etc. Thanks for a parent volunteer, an inflatable astronomy lab was used to help the student understand the Earth and its place in the universe. Lastly, a small group of 5th graders were selected to attend the Connecticut Leadership Academy at Naugatuck Valley Community College. This experience will be brought back to BES to help develop connections to the world outside of BES and to help students build skills around communication, diversity, and leadership.

Superintendent report:

Dr. Olzacki commented that the WMS winter school concert was wonderful and he was very impressed with the decorum of the students, the sound, and everything about the evening.

Dr. Olzacki asked Mr. Thomas Brayton of the Dawn Hochsprung Project initiative to get up and stay a few words regarding this wonderful initiative. Mr. Brayton advised that both Bonnie Grzlek and Linda Butkus were also in attendance who have been working on this initiative along with Carol Ann Brown who was on via teleconference. He showed the BOE a mockup of the proposed statue that will be erected in the BES courtyard Dawn's honor once the funds have been raised. The sculpture is of Dawn's dog Bella and an open book. Bella, Dawn's standard poodle, was very present in the school and could be seen many days walking the halls to greet students getting off the bus or if they were having a difficult day. They have commissioned artist Janice Mauro of Southern Connecticut to do the sculpture and are very pleased with the sculpture she has designed. Mr. Brayton advised that he's been in close communication with the region's attorney, Mark Sommaruga, for the legal portion of the project. He went on to advise that they have created a Facebook page called the Dawn and Bella Fund and are seeking tax-deductible donations which can be sent, payable to The Dawn and Bella Fund, to Newtown-Sandy Hook Community Foundation, Inc., 2 Washington Square, Newtown, CT 06470. For fundraising they have issued a press release to the Republican American newspaper. The next step will be active fundraising and to make sure they have all of the information that they need to be able to gift this sculpture to the region. For more information on the sculptor, Janice Mauro, you can visit her website at www.goodwoodstudio.com.

Dr. O asked Mr. Rafferty and Ms. Yatsenick to present the comprehensive school counseling curriculum.

Mr. Rafferty advised that while we have committed to improving the academic experience, they want to also take care of the social emotional part as well. He went on to state that they would be touching on the secondary aspect at this point as they are still vetting and working on the elementary schools. Mr. Rafferty advised that they will come back to a BOE meeting in the spring to present the elementary comprehensive school counseling curriculum. Mr. Rafferty and Ms. Yatsenick presented the five highlights: **All** - Counselors will have multiple touch points with 100% of the students. These range from individual check-ins to classroom lessons, **Adjusted** - School Counselors assist in character education; fostering civic responsibility, kindness, and bullying awareness. They also focus on skill development in becoming productive and well-adjusted young people through the delivery of classroom lessons. Ms. Yatsenick shared with the board members that she sat in a class at BES and talked to them about what do if two people have a disagreement and the answers the students gave were very insightful. **Ready** - The curriculum promotes college and career readiness. Career awareness lessons at the elementary level partner with a grades 6-12 Naviance career curriculum this is in place at WMS and NHS. Everyone leaves with a plan.

Transitions - This plan allow for true vertical transition in terms of support services for students as they move and grow from PK-12. It also establishes a systematic review of all student progress and creates an intervention protocol in the Counseling Department district-wide. **Capacity** - The plan builds capacity for all. District-wide, counselors are participating in professional development such as Crisis training, Narcan, True Colors, etc. and holding monthly meetings to ensure consistent delivery

and to discuss presenting themes, issues, and support strategies. This professional planning enables everyone to grow, from staff to students.

Ms. Van Aken mentioned to Ms. Yatsenick that the State might still be offering mental health first aid for free and will forward info to Ms. Yatsenick.

Mr. Rafferty advised the Board that he realizes that they touched upon the social emotional learning (Wingman) during the last meeting. They will come back in the spring to give an update.

Finally, Dr. Olzacki mentioned that the State graduation requirements continue to change and that hopefully by the next scheduled BOE meeting, he will have more info to bring to the table.

Committee reports

Building: Mr. Chapman advised that the committee met last week and set the calendar for remainder of the calendar year. The NHS building project is on time and on schedule. They are finishing phase 3 on January 31. The committee is still working on items such as the track and two additional tennis courts but everything is proceeding well. Approximately 65% of the site work is complete.

District Advisory Committee: Ms. Morgan advised that the committee will be presenting their proposal during the next BOE meeting and that Jim Agostine will be contacted to send all of the information to the BOE early enough for them to review.

Finance/Facilities: Mr. Bauer advised that the committee met tonight and discussed the year-to-date financials and the NHS renovation project financials. He mentioned that the region received the first reimbursement from the State and will be billing for the second one. They also discussed the food service budget, and 2nd quarter transfers. The next Finance/Facilities meeting to take place February 4, 2019.

Board chair comments

Ms. Morgan thanked WMS for the wonderful winter concert which was put on. It was an impressive evening. Ms. Van Aken mentioned that another important event that happened was the Math National Honor Society induction. It was outstanding and it was great to see the kids so enthusiastic about Math and Ms. Luby was quite impressive by completing the Rubik's cube puzzle while speaking to the audience.

Public comment – none

Old business

Ms. Morgan advised that during the public comment section of the last BOE meeting a NHS senior came to talk to the board members in regards to finding a better way to communicate with teachers. Ms. Morgan mentioned that she had asked Ms. Schwartz to send the current texting policy to the members prior to the meeting and wanted to know if there were any comments or suggestions. Ms. Morgan felt that texting could get people into big trouble and that there are other means by which students and teachers can communicate and wouldn't like to see it changed. Ms. Van Aken commented that students should not be able to have 24/7 access to teachers. Ms. Zmek also commented that each teacher would potentially need a district cell phone and that it would be opening up a can of worms and that boundaries need to be kept.

New business - none

Other business –

Ms. Zmek advised that the Community Relations committee would like to hold another community conversation and are thinking that they may have one in fall. The committee will be meeting in the coming weeks for further discussion on the feasibility and need for a conversation. Ms. Zmek also mentioned that Dr. Olzacki will be having a Superintendent's advisory council meeting as well as a PTO/PIM potluck and would like to make sure that it wouldn't be overkill.

Adjournment: Ms. Van Aken *moved* to adjourn and seconded by Mr. Lampart. The **motion carried unanimously 7-0-0.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:16 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Natascha Schwartz, BOE Clerk

Recorded and filed subject to Board of Education approval by: Natascha Z. Schwartz, Board Clerk, 1/28/2019