



PLYMOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CENTRAL OFFICE
27 NORTH HARWINTON AVENUE
TERRYVILLE, CONNECTICUT 06786

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of Plymouth Public Schools is to challenge, inspire, and prepare all students for success in an ever-changing and complex world.

PLYMOUTH BOARD OF EDUCATION

SPECIAL
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS AND CENTRAL OFFICE STAFF ONLY
WILL MEET IN THE
TERRYVILLE HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA
33 NORTH HARWINTON AVENUE
TERRYVILLE, CT 06786

OTHERS
VIRTUAL MEETING – AUDIO ONLY

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2021

6:00 P.M.

MINUTES

- Present: Mr. Seaman, Mrs. Kulesa, Mrs. Lucian, Mr. Elsaghir, Mrs. Kremmel, Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani, Mr. Showers, Mrs. Johnson and Mr. Foote
- Also Present: Mrs. Turner, Interim Superintendent, Mrs. Mozak-Pezza, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, Ms. Aronheim, Director of Pupil Personnel & Special Education Services, Mr. Tencza, Business Manager, and Mr. Trudeau, Director of Technology
- Also Present Via Zoom: Mrs. Loveland, Principal Harry S. Fisher Elementary School, Mrs. Holleran, Interim Principal Plymouth Center School, Ms. Suffridge, Principal Eli Terry Jr. Middle School and Mr. Hults, Principal Terryville High School

1. Call to Order and Pledge to the Flag

Mr. Seaman called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. The group joined in the Pledge to the Flag.

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PLYMOUTH, CT
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
PREPARED FOR RECORD

2021 JAN 25 AM 11:37

Erica Caluya
TOWN CLERK

2. Adoption of the Agenda

MOTION: To entertain a motion to adopt the agenda as presented.
Motion Mr. Foote, second Mr. Showers, any discussion, all in favor, any abstentions, motion passes

3. Budget Workshop #1 for 2021 - 2022 Budget

Mr. Seaman, Board Chair - Highlights

- * In reviewing the budget, with a 2.53% increase and 2.33% of that figure is in contractual obligations, he commends everyone who worked on this budget.
- * 2.53%, in his eyes, is not a huge increase outside of the contractual obligations.
- * He is not in favor of cutting anything off of the budget at this time and feels that this is a fair and honest budget.
- * Tax rate in the town is holding steady at this point in time.
- * The town is ½% point from when it was last hear. It is not in the negative.
- * Reorganization of the schools is forthcoming.
- * His concern when reviewing the budget was the district is losing a lot of students to other schools and this is costing the district and the taxpayers money.
- * Although the school district does a great job with its college students, vocational programs need to start reappearing in the school system. Our Director of Curriculum is gathering some of that information together.
- * He would like to see the technology education program brought back to the middle school. Although, there are no figures available at this time, he feels this is doable for this upcoming season with the reorganization taking place. He feels the district can do a better job in bringing back the vocational programs for those students who want to take the vocational route.

Open Up For Discussion

Mrs. Johnson – Comment - She agrees that the District needs to go back and focus on Technology Education. She is glad this is being considered and the numbers are being explored. This is a program that is highly lacking in the middle school. She also feels Family & Consumer Science should be put back in the middle school as well. Also, she would like some to see some type of a course in Personal Finance.

Mr. Seaman – Some items brought forth by the Director of Curriculum when meeting with the board chair:

- * Technology Education in the middle school.
- * Early Childhood, Education Childhood Development (leading into a possible teaching career)
- * CNA (which could lead to a medical or nursing career)

Mr. Seaman indicated he believes Personal Finance should be mandatory but was told there were some drawbacks. A Curriculum Committee to be formed in the future to discuss viable options and weigh the good vs. the bad.

Mr. Elsaghir – question – Can you just clarify when you mean we are losing money when the kids go out of district?

Mr. Seaman – response – It cost the district for transportation and tuition. In the budget, the district pays for some of that tuition.

Mr. Elsaghir – question – More specifically, where?

Mr. Seaman – response – Oliver Wolcott Tech – Wamogo Vo-Ag School, just to name a couple.

Mr. Elsaghir – question – As a whole, that costs us more money to send the kids to those schools than it would if they decided to stay here?

Mr. Seaman - response – I don't want to say "yes" but I would ...

Mrs. Turner – That total amount was almost \$600,000. The tuition for VoAg is \$6,800 per student. But, obviously, we cannot offer that here. But, we do not pay tuition for technical schools. But, we pay for the kids to go to charter and magnet schools and we need to pay to transport them. So, all total that whole bucket is almost \$600,000.

Mr. Seaman – I would say so it may be close to what we spend district-wide per pupil, if I were to guess.

Mrs. Kremmel - Comment – She would like to see more opportunities for our students who are not necessarily taking the university or college path. Knowing that the experiences our students receive whether or not they follow those paths, vocational classes, i.e. foods or CNA will enrich their lives in many ways beyond just a career path. I agree, we should be offering those programs.

Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani – She reviewed the budget, first looking at every line that was a positive to see what they were. There were more negative lines than positive lines. She thinks the budget does line up very well to what the school does need. The more positive the better. Her children are not the AP type of kinds and they would definitely enjoy cooking class and enjoy ...inaudible.

Mrs. Lucian – Agrees with everyone here. Cooking class would be awesome. Her younger child is not very academically advanced as her older child but she would still like to see credits needed to get into college, i.e. business and math.

Mrs. Kulesa – She has been advocating for years to have more variety in our curriculum. However, she believes that students who attend charter schools or magnet schools and the number of classes that the district would need to offer these students to make

it attractive to them to come back to this school district is beyond our ability. She is just being honest because if a child is going to an art magnet school if the district were to add 2 classes in Art, these students are not coming back to the district for that.

Mr. Seaman – Correct

Mrs. Kulesa – So, I think that the district needs to expand its offerings for sure for the kids who are already here but I do not necessarily think it is going to attract kids back from schools that they went to in order to have a specialized education.

Mr. Seaman – I agree with you, but I think we may, down the road, offer some of this, maybe this will prevent some kids from leaving. We probably will not get the kids back because no one wants to change schools.

Mrs. Kulesa – Possibly

Mr. Seaman – These students took a big step to go to a different school in the first place. He knows this first hand because that is what he did. He went to a technical school. But, perhaps if the district offered something along those lines, maybe there are kids that are not sure what they want. Maybe this would give them some insight and they could say “Yeah, I’m interested in that” or definitely not interested in that. At least they have the options.

Mrs. Kulesa – Right

Mr. Seaman – question to Director of Curriculum & Interim Superintendent – How would it be for Technology Education for the 2021 – 2022 school year or a Foods Program in the Middle School. Is it feasible, dollars and logistically?

Mrs. Mozak-Pezza –Director of Curriculum & Instruction

- * Re-purpose room at the middle school that was originally a room for Technology Education.
- * Probably need to purchase new equipment since much of the equipment is old and does not work.
- * Foods – There is not a huge program that has recently been at the middle school so we do not know what the facilities for this program would look like. It would depend on looking at what type of facilities are available to us and what we would have to do to revamp them into classrooms for i.e. ovens. If plumbing is needed it would most likely be a more expensive part of this project.

Mr. Seaman – So when the Technology Program was at the middle school, what was the interest in that? Do we know what the interest was? Was it full, well received?

Mrs. Mozak-Pezza – She believes the last time the program was run it was as Unified Arts. Each student took a turn to take the class so they got a sense of what it was

like. Her guess, if the district were to reinstate the program, it would probably be the same thing to give kids the opportunity to try out the program so they could see if it was something that would be of interest to them.

Mr. Seaman – Do you think between you and Matt, we could have a figure of what that would cost and bring this figure to the January 27th meeting?

Mrs. Mozak-Pezza – We could try.

????????? – When the Technology Education Teacher left, the district could not find another teacher to replace him.

Mr. Seaman – We would have to research that and see what the feasibility is.

Mrs. Mozak-Pezza – There is only one school in the state for Technology Education Certification and that is Central. She is not familiar with their program.

Mr. Seaman – We need to take a look at Technology Education and possibly Foods and see where we are facilities-wise and if it is feasible.

Mrs. Turner

- * According to the data that was submitted, 180 students selected to learn outside of the school district which is a lot of students.
- * We are not going to everyone but we can begin to provide opportunities for even some of those students to return to the district. Important that the district offer opportunities to these students so they want to stay in Plymouth.
- * Marketing in the middle school and high school to entice those students so they have an opportunity to take some of these classes and to also show them what they can do at the high school.

Mr. Foote – If the district offers something here, they are going to keep some of the students in an exploratory sense. You may be able to pick up those students who were not able to get into one of the technical schools.

Mrs. Turner

- * Important
 - (a) Ask the 8th grade students who are leaving, why they are leaving?
 - (b) What is it that is not here in Plymouth that would possibly entice those students to remain?
 - (c) Hold interviews with those students who decide to attend another school. This would provide some very good information.

Mrs. Johnson – There are students that remain in the district through elementary school. But, there are also 5th graders who go off to another school. We should also be enticing those students to remain in the district. If we are going to offer more classes in the middle school, then it is the 5th graders that we need to market to.

Mr. Showers – He would like to also see a graphic program included. For example, in Waterbury, they do all of the printing in the high school for the entire town. CNT Machine. CWE in Waterbury – 3 weeks in school; 3 weeks on the job.

???? – We do have graphics at the high school.

Mr. Seaman – The district would need a strong School-to-Career Program which would drive our curriculum.

Mr. Elsaghir – Appreciated what the Interim Superintendent said about marketing students who leave for a purpose and those that remain do so for different purposes. If you think of classes that could be added, they would be never ending. He feels the one thing that people care about most are the kids are receiving the typical types of classes they need whether they go on to college or not. Those being i.e. mathematics, science, English, art. The Fire Science Class we currently have he feels is so utterly specific.

Mr. Seaman – The district is not attempting to be a vocational or technical school. It is just trying to offer classes i.e. Home Economics, Woodworking that we used to have in everyday school and we do not have any more. Not every child that applies to Oliver Wolcott or another technical school gets accepted. Then those kids are here. The Early Childhood/Child Development, I think is huge. If a child wants to become a teacher later on, they have that out of the way. CNA may spark a child's interest. Fire Science Technical Program – Mr. Seaman's 8th grade teacher pointed him in that direction which led him to before a firefighter. He teaches this program in New Haven at Gateway College and Naugatuck Valley also has this program. To become a firefighter one almost must have a degree. This is a great program. He would like to see EMT added to the curriculum as well as an option. This will not only benefit the students but the town as well.

Mrs. Kulesa – An important thing she feels that was mentioned by the Superintendent was the idea of exit interviews. Mrs. Kulesa also suggested conducting a survey at the beginning of the year for grade 5 students and grade 8 students. We may be surprised as to why kids leave to go to different schools. It's not always the programming. We might learn more about ourselves and where we need to focus and understand why the kids are leaving.

Mrs. Turner – Feels it would be good to know why a student was leaving. By doing a survey you find out things: social, emotional reasons why kids leave, cultural reasons. A survey would help us as a district figure out what things we can do to help with the culture of our buildings that we may not know about.

Mrs. Johnson – Her biggest pet peeve over the last 8 years and prior was college, college, college. Not all of our kids are college bound. It is okay not to go to college. A child may want a career or technical background. We need as a district to service all of our kids not just those that are college bound.

Mr. Foote – Just being able to have a choice is great.

Mr. Seaman – So, he feels that the Board is all in agreement. So going back to the budget. The Board needs more information before it can make an intelligent decision as to the budget. Next meeting will be on January 27th and at that time the Board would have more information to determine if it will be feasible for the 2021 – 2022 school year to add or at least to include 1 or 2 of the programs mentioned. This decision will affect or re-arrange the budget somehow if that is the path the Board decides it wants to take.

Mrs. Kulesa – Is there any way we can ask the kids to gauge what kind of interest there would be? Nothing formal, even if the teachers have a conversation with them. To see if the interest is out there.

Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani – If we were to add a foods program and we were to go hybrid or shut down, the kinds would not be able to benefit from the program.

Mr. Seaman – Then we would have to assess the situation at that point. He does not want to base next school year on COVID. He's hoping that next year is going to look a lot different than this year.

Everyone was in agreement to have a 2nd Budget Workshop on Wednesday, January 27, 2021.

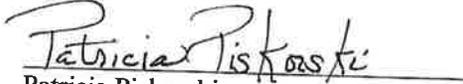
4. Public Comment (3-minute limit per speaker)

None

5. Adjournment

MOTION: To entertain a motion to adjourn at 6:31 p.m. Motion Mr. Showers, second Mrs. Lucian, any discussion, all in favor, any abstentions, motion passes.

Respectfully submitted


Patricia Piskorski
Recording Secretary
Plymouth Board of Education