

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

TERRYVILLE HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY
33 NORTH HARWINTON AVENUE
TERRYVILLE, CT 06786

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16, 2019

6:00 P.M.

MINUTES

Present: Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Kulesa, Mrs. Lucian, Mrs. Kremmel, Mr. Showers, Mr. Bourbonniere,
Mr. Elsaghir and Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani
Absent: Mr. Foote

Others Present: Dr. Semmel, Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Hendrickson Business Manager, Mrs. Parsons,
Director of Curriculum & Instruction, Mrs. Trinks, Director of Pupil Personnel and Special Education
Services, Mr. Trudeau, Director of Technology and Principals.

1. Call to Order

Mrs. Johnson called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. The group joined in the Pledge to the Flag.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

MOTION: To adopt the agenda as presented. Motion Mr. Showers, seconded Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani, all in favor, any opposed, any abstentions, motion passes.

Mrs. Johnson – For the general audience – After the Budget Presentation to the Board and following their comments and questions, there will be public comment where each individual will have 3 minutes for questions and comments. Individuals are to write their name and address on the sign-up-sheet provided at the podium and to address themselves to the Board. There will be no communication back and forth during the Board's discussion of the budget.

3. Budget Workshop #1 for 2019 – 2020 Budget

An accounting report was made available to the public should there be any questions that arise during the presentation by principals and administrators. Below is a brief summary of the meeting.

Barbara K. Foote
TOWN CLERK

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PLYMOUTH, CT
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Mr. Hults, Principal Terryville High School

- Split between Terryville High School and Eli Terry Jr. Middle School – grades 6 – 12 Reading Coach
- \$21,000 – NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges). This amount covers the cost of 10 – 12 individuals for their hotel, food and travel. Every 10 years the high school is subject to this self-study. This fee is non-negotiable.
- Technology Education – Funding needs for the Fire Science Class
- Woodshop Technical Educational Piece needs funding due to the rising cost of wood.

Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani – Question#1 - The effect of sharing the music teacher with the middle school.

Question #2 - If there were enough electives in the high school that those 20 – 25 children will have to get a study hall in order to have enough credits to graduate at the end of the year. Concerned that every student has an elective option.

Response #1 - Mr. Hults – Currently the majority to Mr. Keane’s caseload is band and chorus. To round out five teaching sections, which is what is done for all teachers, Mr. Keane has some piano classes, music appreciation class and music lab for students who are unable to attend a period of band or chorus due to AP courses, etc. We would still keep band and chorus and still be able to offer one elective.

Response #2 – Mr. Hults - This is not a simple answer. It all depends on how the schedule falls. We do as best as we can to fill the electives. Schedule process commences in June after graduation. Counselors also try to work with the students.

Mrs. Lucian – Questioned if the Literacy Coach for grades 6 – 12 was a teacher or an administrator because of the high cost.

Response – Mr. Hults – It would be under teacher, which is under the LA English salary.

Dr. Semmel – Estimate costs include benefits not just salary cost. Prediction is step 8 or 9 on the pay scale or even possibly higher.

Mr. Bourbonniere – Question #1 – Literacy Specialist – (to be split between the middle and high schools) Shouldn’t we be capturing those kids at the elementary school before they enter middle and high schools?

Question #2 – The eventual elimination of French. State Mandate to go into effect – one world language is needed and credits increasing from 22 – 25. That being said, will a student fulfill his obligation by taking one year of Spanish?

Question #3 – Are there any issues with Mr. Keane being at both the middle and high schools. For example, if a student is having issues with a particular song in band or chorus and Mr. Keane is unavailable how will this student’s concern be alleviated?

Response #1 – Mrs. Parsons – The district has had a lot of influx of children over time and sometimes these children we are working with at the middle and high schools are not children that have started with the district. These are students that have had gaps in their education along the way and it is the district’s obligation to serve any child whether they began with the district or not.

Response #2 – Mrs. Parsons – Spanish is offered in grades 8 – 12, therefore, the student would qualify by taking one year of Spanish under the State Mandate.

Response #3 – Mr. Hulst – The matter would be handled no different than as with any other teacher. student would get together with Mr. Keane during a free period of schedule something after school.

Mr. Suffridge – Principal Eli Terry Jr. Middle School

- Science Supplies – Anytime a curriculum changes the cost of supplies increases.
- Music – Next year with the additional students in grade 6, the middle school is looking to add a section. There is definitely a need to add a third class. It would be unfair to hire a teacher, knowing that this would only be a one-year position.
- Literacy Coordinator – To consult with teachers and to provide direct instruction based on the need at this point. The ultimate goal is for the students to exit intervention and keep them out.

Mrs. Lucian – Question #1 – Is the Literacy Coach going to teach Intervention. How many days would she be in your building? Will she/he be teaching Tier III of Intervention?

Response #1 – Ms. Suffridge – She/he were to come on the day we would need someone. Number of days would be dependent upon need.

Dr. Semmel – We would need to see the results from the various testing before we determine the number of days.

Mrs. Parsons – Comments – Certifications needed 102 – Remedial Reading and 097 - Language Arts Consultant; Tier I, instruction for all students is currently being managed through both the ELA Department (department head is at the high school) and the Literacy Coach who is at the middle school. However, there is a need to facilitate Tier II and Tier III for the children who are at risk and well below grade level. This position would be split between the high school and the middle school and the time spent at each school would be based on need. This individual would work with all interventionists at the buildings, tutors, and teachers to evaluate and remediate children in addition, help set up plans, evaluate and diagnosis what the reading difficulty is and create a plan and work with the interventionist, tutor and teacher to put the plan into action. There may be a time when this individual would be working directly with students.

Mr. Bourbonniere – Comment – High number of students, enrollment chart shows fluctuation of Students and he feels class sizes are still too large.

Mrs. Collins – Principal Plymouth Center School

- Initial plan to reduce the 5th grade by one section in order to increase next year's 2nd grade by one section. Currently, there are 51 students in 1st grade in two classrooms. Current 2nd grade, she is hoping to place a full day tutor with the students to support that classroom on an ongoing basis.
- Money allocated for resources for the 2nd grade. Plymouth Center has not had three sections of 2nd grade since workshops were fully implemented.

Mr. Bourbonniere – Questions – How many hours will the tutor be in next year's grade 3? Will the tutor be pulled to sub?

Response– Mrs. Collins – We try to maintain the tutors in the roles they are hired for but if we get desperate, do we pull the tutors, yes. It is a possibility. We do have a building substitute at this point and we do at this time have an intern so that does give us two people available to help us cover classes. However, if something unexpected comes up, we would have to look to tutors for possible coverage.

Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani – Question #1 - How do you keep documented incidents so low at your school?

Response – Mrs. Collins – On a day to day basis, I am not having major incidents brought to me from playground or from the cafeteria or from the classroom level that involve a lot of classroom altercation. However, there have been some difficulties in the area of special education that have required interventions among the adults. Student on Student v Student on Staff

Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani – Question #2 - Based on your professional opinions, do you think that 27 students going 2 years in a row is detrimental to their future as far as falling behind?

Response – Mrs. Collins – It is difficult to make an absolute projection. Proud to report that the students are holding their own academically. Concerns for the group regarding social emotional behavioral.

Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani – Question #3 – Can you explain paraprofessional vs tutor vs 2 separate classes?

Response – Mrs. Collins – Two classes, smaller cohort all day and you may be able to break up some of the challenges. If you have the full time tutor, there are many ways this person can be utilized.

Response – Mrs. Parsons – Waiting for midyear academic data. With the tutor support, we are seeing progress that does more than maintain but improve.

Mrs. Kulesa – Question #1 – Is there space for the tutor to physically pull out students. Is there possibility for separation?

Response – Mrs. Collins – Maybe

Mrs. Kulesa – Question #2 – Is there a likelihood that the same tutor would be in that same position next year as is now.

Response – Mrs. Collins – I cannot promise, it would be nice.

Response – Dr. Semmel – Important to keep in mind for both the 1st and 2nd grade classes, at budget time last year, the current 2nd grade class had a total of 23 students. There were two sections of 11 and 12. However, over the summer the number of families that moved into the Plymouth Center School area, the numbers went from 23 to 27. 1st grade classes also increased. Since it is only January 16 students can go from 27 to 32 or the 27 can also go to 23. We try to balance the needs of all the students with the costs. Currently, there are 27 students and a tutor would be the appropriate response.

Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani – Question – How many staff members did you lose when there was the last cut and how many have you gained back?

Responses – Mrs. Collins – .9 coach position, 2 teachers (last year)

Dr. Semmel - .9 position due to decrease in funding from the state and two teachers due to the class sizes getting lower.

Mr. Bourbonniere – It was made at the Board of Education level from the recommendation of the administrators.

Mrs. Johnson – It is a collective decision. Mrs. Parsons – There is a distinction as to how many staff were lost and how many positions were lost. The position that was lost was the literacy coach and staff members fluctuate annual based on the number of students.

Mr. Bourbonniere – This problem is not unique to Plymouth. Budgetary Issues, compromise, focus on student needs first, do not kick the can down the road.

Mrs. Kulesa – The data indicates that the students are doing well in Math; SEL may be difficult to separate personality clashes.

Mrs. Trinks – Tutor is now only 2 hours with a group. Next year the tutor will be all day so increased flexibility to support academic and SEL needs.

Dr. Semmel – Reference per pupil expenditure Plymouth vs. State Slide – Not overspending in Plymouth.

Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani- Question – What are the number of incidents student vs. staff?

Response – Mrs. Collins – I am sorry I do not have that available.

Mr. Bourbonniere – Comment – Mrs. Collins has done an awesome job. Thank you

Mrs. Loveland, Principal Harry S. Fisher Elementary School

- Slight increase in literacy due to acquiring more books in the classroom library
- Dean of Students

Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani – Question #1– Are most of the documented incidents during lunch and recess. And if so, would it be beneficial to hire extra staffing during those times of the day?

Response – Mrs. Loveland – Many of them, yes. Yes, that would be helpful; however, this requires a trained individual to be out there who know the student, know the types of games they should be playing, identifying signs of body language and interaction. A Dean could be trained in other areas not only the ones mentioned that are most common.

Mrs. Lucian – Question – Do the teachers have recess duty?

Response – Mrs. Loveland – Not something they typically do.

Mrs. Kulesa – Or lunch duty?

Response – Mrs. Loveland – Correct

Mrs. Parsons - that is when the teachers get their typical planning and team time.

Mr. Bourbonniere – Questions – Why did the previous principal not need a Dean? Never heard of it for an elementary school? \$80,000 to monitor lunch and recess? Disrespectful to previous principal.

Response – Mrs. Parsons – We could only go based on year to year look at the data from that year. Title 1 – growing need and gap between 2 elementary based on free and reduced lunch figure; explained Title I funding where free and reduced lunch is indicator of need and money must be used to support the higher need; see changes.

Dr. Semmel – Observed that SEL and behavior supports were high; new administration seeing need and data supports; request based on need; not just lunch and recess; district person that could support other buildings if needed in crisis.

Mr. Bourbonniere – Question – What emergencies would this position alleviate and please clarify what is meant by emergencies? Police, Fire, EMT emergencies.

Response – Dr. Semmel – Lost student all hands on deck, could potentially assist teacher. This is a teacher position not an administrative position.

Mr. Bourbonniere – Question – As a teacher, how would this individual raise Math and ELA scores?

Response – Mrs. Parsons – The deal with deal with SEL first to make available for learning; free principal to support instruction. This is a position to help make certain that all students are accessible and available to learn.

Mr. Bourbonniere - Question – Would it be beneficial if we hired an Interventionist to help Mrs. Loveland at the school for approximately \$20,000?

Response– Dr. Semmel – The students need consistency, \$20,000 could mean a revolving door which would not be consistent; training is needed and count on to support all staff; \$80,000 (prediction) and can well be \$60,000 and if we hire internally then replace with new teacher could be less including benefits; cost avoidance in future, if make more available for learning in elementary then higher achievement and decrease need in upper grades.

Mrs. Lucian – Question – How many students are at Eli Terry Jr. Middle School?

Response – Mrs. Parsons – 20 less at Harry S. Fisher Elementary School than at Eli Terry Jr. Middle School –350 to 400 seems to be the figure for an assistant principal to be hired in elementary schools. Dr. Semmel – We are not asking for assistant principal.

Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani – Question – The theme of tonight seems that everything is temporary, i.e. music teacher, class sizes. Is the behavioral issue a temporary thing? Is it more geared to one class size that will out grow Fisher and move on?

Response – Mrs. Loveland – These are K-5 students. There is no concentration where everything is happening in one grade. A Dean is critical; he/she has the ability to make the home school connection.

Mrs. Kremmel – Question – Feels that she is hearing the same conversation as she has heard in past years and the Board was assured that having another school psychologist would help alleviate those problems. But now she is still hearing that we are continuing to have those problems. Is your school psychologist in the building all day, every day? Therefore, there is no time at all that your school psychologist is out managing a student. Can we use the school psychologist from PCS over at Fisher to help alleviate problems? It was mentioned that this would come from Title 1 funding but also that this individual can be used throughout the district. How does this effect Title I funding? Percentage of students of 504/IEP- percentage in grade 5.

Response – Mrs. Loveland, yes all day every day. Mrs. Trinks – Sometimes the school psychologist may be out of district PPT/testing/or facilitator meetings. PC has to support PreK, pre-referral, coach's support, reading, writing, Math, Tier III support in all buildings. Mrs. Parsons – The Title I, if temporary is okay. However this could change in the future, if need changes we would have to review, including the possibility of needing to only pay this position partially from Title I; cannot supplant, only supplement. Mrs. Loveland – I do not know, spread across grades.

Mrs. Lucian – Question – Do you call home for altercations? Do you find the parents helpful?

Response – Mrs. Loveland – Call home on all behavior consequences. Yes, parents are doing the best they possibly can. It is a long-standing partnership.

Mr. Elsaghir – Question -Discipline process, learning it is a process, robs all students of time, parent role, what do you think about the role of parents?

Response – Mrs. Loveland – We put many demands on students. They are unable to cool off in a room, triggers in classroom, other kids, clashes, factors handle at school not in their lives at home, majority doing what they need to be doing 99% of time, smaller population, Tier II mistakes along way so don't turn into Tier III support, cannot hand problem to home, change pathway and how their choices impact others.

Mr. Bourbonniere – Question – Why not share a psychologist a few hours a week like the shared music position?

Response – Mrs. Trinks – SEL impacts all aspects of day vs music that is more discrete skill; a few hours per week keeps from developing rapport needed to assist students or support an emergency/mental health crisis.

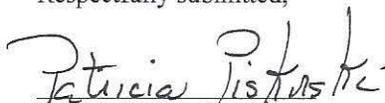
4. Public Comment (3-minute limit per person)

A number of individuals: (1) expressed their opinion regarding the grade 3 classroom for next year at Plymouth Center School, (2) retaining Mr. Keane full time at Terryville High School, and adding staff to the music program at Eli Terry Jr. Middle School.

5. Adjournment

MOTION: Motion to adjourn at 9:30 p.m. Mrs. Kremmel, seconded Mr. Showers, all in favor, motion passes.

Respectfully submitted,


Patricia Piskorski
Recording Secretary