

Conneaut School District

PUBLIC ADDITIONAL WORK SESSION

MINUTES

Tuesday, March 17, 2015

7:00 PM

The Conneaut School Board of Directors met Tuesday, March 17, 2015 at the Alice Schafer Annex gymnasium.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Board President Mrs. Jody Sperry.

The following members answered to roll call:

Mr. Boyce	Mr. Ellis	Mrs. Klink
Mrs. Krachkowski	Mrs. Luckock (arrived at 7:17 PM)	
Mr. Schaef	Mrs. Sperry	Dr. Thomas

It was noted that Mr. Burnham was absent.

Administrators Present-

Superintendent: Jarrin Sperry

Business Manager: Kara Onorato

Director of Special Education: Susy Walters

Technology Coordinator – Rick Kelly

School Police Office – Kurt Sitler

Principals: Joel Wentling, David Maskrey, Sharon Sielski, Doug Parks, Kevin Burns and Adam Jardina.

Visitor Recognition

Mrs. Sperry offered an opportunity for visitor recognition, noting as per Policy 903 – Public Participation in Board Meetings. All visitors who are recognized during the Visitor Recognition are allotted a maximum of five (5) minutes to address matters of their concern, unless otherwise determined by the Board President. Visitor recognition is to be limited to thirty (30) minutes unless otherwise decided by the Board. No one addressed the school board.

Discussion Items

Board Goals-

In providing an update around mid-year as well as some insight for next years' board goals tonight's meeting includes Student achievement: Technology and School Safety.

First to speak is Kurt Sitler, School Safety Officer on School Safety- he is planning on addressing internet safety issues, and sexting laws (specifically with 6th and 7th grade students in the middle school). Videos are available to show students which will discuss the laws and punishments that go along with their actions. A similar presentation was done last year to the 8th grade class which took some by surprise to learn what the consequences can be. There are more doing it than we might believe.

All in all it is going pretty smoothly in all the schools with no issues overall. Mr. Maskrey added that Officer Sitler is a welcome asset to the District.

The Board asked if Officer Sitler felt sexting has been reduced: he replied, he believes it is still going on and does not feel the students are educated as far as the law/understanding that it is illegal and can be child pornography. The ramifications could lead to felony charges and qualify for Megan's Law. It also hampers getting into colleges and their careers.

Mrs. Sperry commented that a few years ago "sexting" was mentioned and the term was not familiar to the District Attorney of Crawford County. Officer Sitler agreed that yes, a few years ago the police force did not want to be bothered with it but now it is an epidemic.

Mrs. Sperry indicated another board goal was to create a safer environment for students. To broaden that objective do you feel discipline issues have gone down and is there less bullying? Officer Sitler indicated that he has been with the District now close to a full year and past discipline he is not sure but Mr. Maskrey has told him discipline is way down. Mr. Maskrey interjected and said discipline issues have been cut in half.

Mrs. Sperry asked about issues with iPads. Officer Sitler indicated that security has been beefed up thanks to the Technology Department as well as better iPad cases. This resulted in fewer broken or damaged than in the past. For example, last year we ended the year with nine or ten iPads reported stolen but this year we only at two.

Mr. Boyce asked about the impact Officer Sitler has made in the elementary and middle schools and how would you rate yourself with this age group? In other words how much of an impact have you had at the elementary and middle schools because what he sees is students will get to know you better in 1st grade and know you for 12 years, so what impact to them as far as trust. Officer Sitler feels the impact is pretty good, he knows more about the elementary schools due to going in and reading stories to the classes. Just this morning he was at Conneaut Lake Elementary he pops in to see a specific student. He will be in the elementary schools now and in the hallway students want to high five him and talk to him. They don't fear him but trust him. Mr. Parks added that Officer Sitler has sat down with parents and student(s) to let them know the seriousness of their actions.

As far as the middle schools, if he gets there during lunch there is interaction, some he knows from interacting with the last year. One particular group of girls were causing problems which he worked with and this year they are coming to him stating that is now all in the past, just drama.

Overall, he feels students are comfortable to talk to him, are accustomed to seeing him and even wave at him, if they have a chance will say hello.

He is hoping to start going to Valley once a month, have lunch with a select group of students that the guidance counselor thinks he should interact with. Mrs. Varner at the elementary school has done this as well whereby a group of students parent(s) are in jail or have been in jail, Officer Sitler will go and talk to them. This provides an opportunity for the student to open up and see that police are not bad and that we have a job to protect people not to be afraid of.

Mr. Boyce feels the greatest impact is to get the students to see Officer Sitler as a representative of police who are their friends.

Officer Sitler agreed, to object is to help the students realize he is their friend. He had a grandparent call one time asking him to scare her granddaughter; Officer Sitler told her no, that is not what I am about but will gladly talk to her but I will not scare her. He has also had parents approach him in Wal-Mart and provide information their kids have told them, issues going on in the school. He has also had students come to him to inform about drugs, tobacco, and alcohol. So there is a level trust now, some may not feel comfortable telling him specifically but have told their parents. He understands that they may not want to be singled out as a snitch. Another instance, he and Mr. Burns were at Judge Marwood's Office and the judge asked for the names of students who brought stuff into school. He told her no, he could not do that as it would break the trust he has earned from these students. The judge then agreed and commented what a *breath of fresh air he has brought to the district*.

Technology Update-

Mr. Bossard, Mr. Kelly and Mr. Messerall addressed the Board regarding technology updates which are a part of the 2014-2015 board goals.

Mr. Bossard's PowerPoint presentation included course additions to the Conneaut Cyber Program to include: Family Consumer Science: Money Management; Contemporary Young Adult Literature II; Middle School Literature: available at CVMS and CLMS; and History of Rock and Roll 1 and 2.

Credit Recovery is done through cyber and he has seven students involved this year who will graduate this June. Traditionally we do not have that many but some juniors have doubled up this year and the seniors are motivated to get through. They are taking English, Health and Math courses with Health a big one for vocational students due to scheduling troubles. The past four years he totals 30 students who have been able to utilize this and graduate. A big feather in the cap for the program.

For the first time ever, and may come more prevalent, he has a junior this year who will graduate. This student, just rolled into senior status in January started this year as a junior. This crash coursing on cyber and at mid terms had enough credits to be a senior and will graduate this year. Granted the opportunities cyber offers but you have to be a special student. Mr. Bossard termed our school district as a "shopping mall".

Mr. Bossard mentioned he won a free ENO Board and pen kit valued at \$2,000. He expects it sometime soon and it will be given to Mr. Kelly for storage.

A possible course addition for the middle schools is an Internet Safety Course/iPad Care. It is a well developed course and would have been a 9 week course for 7th or 8th grade. This would provide internet safety through courses of plagiarism, sexting, safety on the internet in keeping personal profiles safe and more. We are almost done but the last two pieces. The big point to this course is there is no staff added; it is run through him and can be taken on top of other courses a student is taking with more of a pass/fail.

In indicating all is done but the last two portions is we have come into a small problem. We just learned today the LMS “learning management system” will be going away. Lightspeed sent an email last night stating initially a big change was coming but this morning we received notice that it is not going to exist after this summer.

In being proactive and being the technology geeks we have looked at other LMS, because one never know digital technology comes and goes, apps change and disappear. Therefore we have always had hand an eye on someday switching, now we are forced. In looking today we found eSchool Plus has an LMS paired with Schoology which integrates with the student information system we end up with. This has all that My Big Campus has and we have already tested it today through chat uploads, quizzes, etc.

In the long run, Mr. Bossard believes it will run fine but some training along the line. The pieces of My Big Campus are still there, just located somewhere else. This termination was a shock to us but they won’t keep it running just for our district. This means our board information will be put on a different setup as well. We have now until the end of summer to migrate the data over. Lightspeed started as a filtering internet service and for some reason are going back to just that.

Mr. Bossard switched back to discussing the iPad course to the middle school. It would be self paced for every student once started with Mr. Bossard as the facilitator and would not be a brick and mortar type. He hopes they would use the iPad as they progress through the course and it could end up being a course in itself someday. Honestly, he felt in today’s age all of us should know about these topics.

Staff training in the District with iPass: If you take what we have done over the last year to include My Big Campus training and iPass, it is massive when you think about it, and a lot funded by a My Big Campus grant. iPass is a situation we are in and was a good choice but with all the grade books it was not what we had in Grade Quick. But iPass put us in a situation where the teacher has had to set it all up. The teachers now know how to do this; we are just going to be in a sliding transition of training with a matter of finding where everything is at/different format. When students even come back to us from college and say they knew how to navigate because we used an LMS system...this transition should be the same.

Mr. Messerall presented a PowerPoint presentation on iPads:

This school year 9th graders started this school year in an iPad Boot Camp during the first week of school. Topics covered include: How to use the device; How to treat it responsibly; How to take notes: How to research: How to create: and How to Transfer work from app to app.

Success stories he has had with teachers and students using the iPads include: a math teacher using the iPad to measure velocity and trajectory. This was done using the iPad app, Vernier Video Physics. During this project students created miniature rockets to launch and the app measured their velocity and trajectory via video recording and processing. Many teachers are starting to integrate live presentation and assessment apps like Nearpod and Kahoot! Into their classrooms on a regular basis. Learning Support classrooms are using the device and apps in many different ways such as speech/hearing the device read to them and associating pictures with words and having the words read back to the student for recognition and pronunciation. Students are also learning to code on their iPads using Code.org They are also using Study

island and Quizlet in many of their classes to prepare for quizzes, tests and standardized assessments.

Mr. Messerall has witnessed a growing use since the first year. Throughout the first couple years, some classrooms would not use the iPad at all. During this school year though, any classroom he has walked into has students using the iPad for a variety of classroom tasks such as note taking, research, composition, creative work and more.

Text Book Distribution: as one of the board goals in removing textbooks Mr. Kelly believes we have been fairly successful in transitioning textbooks to the iPads. Next year he plans on pushing them into the LMS with a little snag with My Big Campus now. He still plans on making the big change next year.

This year the Middle Schools received iPad carts which utilized iPads from last year's graduating class. Each school received two carts with 24 iPads each. Students are being introduced to the devices before they reach the high school and will have a better understanding of how to use them prior to the 9th grade. Teachers have been trained and are already using them in their classrooms. Tech tubs provide secure storage, have power to charge the iPads while in the storage unit and provide spare/additional classroom resources.

Tech tubs are now being utilized in the buildings for teachers in the event a student does not have theirs for whatever reason (forgot it, not charged, etc) in an attempt to knock down barriers. Also in preparing for next year we are providing two tech tubs in the middle schools as a pilot in teacher rooms to introduce them as a research tool. We will start replacing the 9 year old desktops to help create more of a buy in from teachers and students.

The tech tubs are gaining momentum, which Mr. Kelly predicts a new generation coming in we can back flush the old iPads. He reminded the Board of the iPad purchases two years ago, of which Apple will not update these iPads in a couple years so we will need to replace them at some point. The then, old iPads will be sent down to the middle school to keep a level of current technology in the buildings. Tech tubs are a better addition to the rooms with Mr. Messerall working with teachers to help their transition. Some have a fear about change, and we experienced this with the high school. After three years of iPads in the high school we have most on board and can't do without the iPads.

Mrs. Sperry asked Mr. Kelly that as we add more technology to the system do we have enough band width to support it. Mr. Kelly replied yes, that was one of the motions approved at last weeks board meeting which doubled our band width starting next year. He will continue to monitor and adjust as needed and as we replace teacher machines we can offer to them to be a pioneer with the tech tubs. This will act as a good replacement strategy as well.

Mr. Messerall then address an iPad cart agreement created for the purpose of creating awareness that teachers and students alike are using district property. This creates the necessity for each time someone signs one in or out they have to fill out the form with a time stamp.

The communities are becoming more comfortable with the iPads as well through programs such as Family Fun Night. With the help of Melissa Good and Joe Kauffman, CVES was able to show

parents how their children are using iPads in grades K-4. An iPad table will be set up again this year, April 9th from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Mr. Messerall is also planning Parent iPad training nights to help parents understand the devices that their children use every day at school and home. He hopes to have more than one location over multiple nights.

Student Achievement is another board goal, therefore, Mr. Sperry had asked the building administrators to discuss aligning curriculum with the PA. Core.

Adam Jardina, Conneaut Valley Elementary School Principal provided a summary of what his building is doing to prepare for the PSSA and data driven instruction. In reviewing the 2013-2014 PSSA data for his building he highlighted how the same data is used for 4th grade. The 2013-2014 PSSA scores include Math – 73%; Reading 73%; and Science 90%. Mr. Jardina was pleased to see these scores, considering his first year with the District was the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year.

The 2014-2015 benchmarking tools, assessments, data analysis and differentiating instruction he has been utilizing Study Island, Dibels, System 44-online and Read 180. Other school initiatives to support student learning include Whole Brain Teaching, Student of the Month awards, First in Math Recognition, Accelerated Reader and Accelerated Math.

Doug Parks, Conneaut Lake Elementary School Principal provided a summary as well. He reported his staff spends countless hours reviewing Common Core components, educating parents during parent conferences and special events, and working with the students. Students are placed in small groups in order to create an environment where they can excel. He admitted, after coming from a high school and seeing the small groups, he felt these small groups were too large. But later realized how well it was working for the students.

Joel Wentling, Conneaut Lake Middle School Principal discussed in general what the atmosphere is in his building. He referenced 5th grade tests which traditionally is the hardest grade for the PSSA tests. Mr. Wentling explained the stress the teachers are under with the realization that test results will personally affect each teacher's performance evaluation. There was a great deal of dialog between Mr. Wentling and the board members discussing this stress, tests and time spent preparing for them.

Kevin Burns, Conneaut Valley Middle School Principal discussed the atmosphere in his building also as stressful. He agreed with Mr. Wentling in that teachers, especially this year, are concerned with achievement and how it affects their performance evaluation. But also, the stress that it places on the students as well. His building is making every effort in coming up with creative and affective tools to assist both teacher and student in obtaining better scores this school year.

David Maskrey/Sharon Sielski, Co – Principals Conneaut Area Senior High School, are aware that their building has to improve their scores. Overall the teachers are both panicked and stressed. In an effort to ease the stress they conduct monthly grade level meetings, listen to the

teachers, and provide direction. They have conducted Cyber Boot Camp for 9th graders, and 9th grade team meetings after Christmas were held to reassign those 9th graders in tutorials based on need. Mr. Maskrey detailed the countless hours teachers spend outside of their work day in reviewing standards.

Lori Patton from the Intermediate Unit has also come down to show how to review last years PVASS scores and see which standards were the weakest.

Mr. Maskrey reminded the Board that 9th, 10th and 11th graders who do not pass the Keystone tests participate in Study Island benchmarks and his building provides Keystone Math classes for 11th graders who did not pass the test. Math teachers have been attending Math collaboration courses at the IU to assist them. Next year they plan on implementing a Keystone Biology course. He, as a former Biology teacher with a degree in biology even had trouble with some of the biology questions and felt that the questions were at a college level.

Ms. Sielski indicated that students know now they have to pass the test, formally the building utilized the Metropolitan test for those who did not pass the test but we do not have that any longer.

She indicated that when they have their team meetings some teachers were stressed and obviously took to heart that the test scores are their failure personally, teachers have taken ownership for student results. Teachers are offering incentives to the students, and remediation for biology. She has also reviewed the test scores and worked with 34 students who were within 25 points of passing and conducted a rotating remediation. Of the 34 scheduled in this group 11 moved up to proficient on the biology.

Ms. Sielski feels in having Mr. Sitler in the building has helped the students feel more secure.

Mr. Hines, Curriculum Director- Mr. Hines provided a web presentation for Common Core to help parents better understand what their children are being tested on, the presentation was available on My Big Campus for the Board to review.

He also reiterated the cyber courses explained by Mr. Bossard. He also plans on adding a US Music II, Geography elective, one level of AP English or two, AP Computer Science, IOS apps and potentially an AP Spanish.

Conneaut Valley Survey, Kevin Burns- Mr. Burns provided a self assessment survey which was conducted at his building the past two years which in essence is a student behavior survey from a staffs perspective. Some of the specific questions on the survey include: a small number of positively and clearly stated student expectations or rules are defined; expected student behaviors are rewarded regularly; school-wide expected student behaviors apply to non classroom settings; supervisors actively supervise (move, scan, and interact) students in non-classroom settings; and physical/architectural features are modified to limit (a) unsupervised settings, (b) unclear traffic patterns, and (c) in appropriate access to and exit from school grounds.

Budget Review- Kara Onorato- Ms. Onorato provided a PowerPoint presentation of the Conneaut School District General Fund Budget for 2015/2016, a preliminary as of 3/17/15. She

indicated this budget preview is a working document and is subject to change. As information for each account is verified and approved, adjustments will be made.

Ms. Onorato thanked the Budget and finance Committee, administration and secretaries for their contributions in putting this together.

Ms. Onorato reviewed the Act 1 timeline with deadline dates as follows;

5/30/15 – Adopt Proposed Final Budget

6/10/15 – Make final proposed budget available for public inspection,

6/20/15 – Public notice of intent to adopt the 15/16

6/30/15 – Final budget adoption.

Mr. Schaefer asked to push to adopt the tentative budget at the April meeting so as to not bump the final deadline, at the June meeting, as has happened in the past. This makes it flow better and we are not counting days.

In reviewing the taxable assessed property value history she noted the districts assessed value history has been tapering off up to and including this next budget year. She then noted there was a slight increase for taxes generated per mill. Conneaut's Act 1 Index is at 2.6% or approximately = to 1.17 mill with 1.17 mill approximately = to \$264,000 additional revenues.

Enrollment history was discussed and there is some indication that this year could be the first in 12 years that the district finishes with more students than we started with due to incoming special education students.

Ms. Onorato then reviewed the budget, as of 3/17/15 with references to 14/15 Adopted Budget; 15/16 Proposed Budget; the Difference over the Last Year; and the % Difference for total revenues, total expenditures, the difference between the two, Additional revenues @ our Index Maximum and then the adjusted difference.

In discussing where the revenue comes from, Ms. Onorato addressed the sources to include local, state, federal and other revenues for 12/13 actual revenues, 13/14 actual revenues, 14/15 proposed revenues, 14/15 YTD revenues, 15/16 proposed revenues and the percent of totals for each source. She provided a pie graph for a different perspective with color coded sources and percentages.

Where does the money go was broken out showing descriptions of main expenses as Instruction, Support Services, Other Non-instructional Services, Facilities Repair and Improvement, Other Financing Uses and the Total. Yearly comparisons were from 12/13 Actual Expenses, 13/14 Actual Expenses, 14/15 Proposed Expenses, 14/15 YTD Expenses and 15/16 Proposed Expenses. She provide a pie graph for this review as well as a more in depth description of expenses such as salaries, benefits, professional and tech services, purchase property services, etc.

The major impacts to the 15/16 school year budget include: retirement, salaries, tuition reimbursement, debt, charter tuition, bussing, texts, software, and tuition to other districts,

equipment, CCCTC and private institutions for a total of \$1,632,112 increase from last year's (14/15 sy) budget.

She described the budget challenges to date to include expenditures increasing at a higher rate than revenues due to Act 1 constraints, cost of employment and retiree benefits, mandatory pension contributions increasing from 21.4% to 25.84% and an increase of \$597,000 on the expense side due to PSERS.

In conclusion, Ms. Onorato will continue to meet with the Budget/Finance Committee, administration and staff, review estimated and possible use of the fund balance and await further discussion/news on the final state budget.

It is noted backups were provided to the board on the following:

- Expense Summary by Function and Object 2015-2016
- Revenue Budget summary Report for 2015-2016
- And, Expense Summary by Object 2015-2016

The board discussed what it cost to educate in our own district versus out of our district, estimated to be approximately the same but other districts costs could be less: even though we have to pay them based on our district average.

Miscellaneous-

Ms. Onorato provided a brief summary of her PASBO Conference she attended last week, noting new fund balance restrictions potentially coming down the line.

Mrs. Sperry announced the Budget/Finance Committee will be meeting with building representatives and noted personnel will have to justify any increases in their budget. It is certainly challenging when retirement increases are more than salary increases and certainly a problem the state should address.

Mrs. Krachkowski asked Ms. Onorato which year, if our district had not consolidated, would we have/had not been able to operate. Ms. Onorato replied this current school year but now since we did consolidate that project is pushed back to around 18/19 school year.

It was noted by Mr. Sperry that some schools did not have a fund balance to cover the PSERS spikes and have dropped many activities such as kindergarten, electives and more, leaving districts at wits end. He feels it could happen some day that our own district still has an athletic team and no one to play or we have to play teams much further away. Ten years ago this would have been unheard of but now we are playing much further than we ever imagined.

Mrs. Sperry reminded everyone that our biggest challenge is getting the message out there, louder than representatives posting trash that is not correct. The public believes what comes from him because schools are not putting the information out there. Mr. Sperry indicated that the district had discussed post cards placed in musical flyers, sports flyers and graduation pamphlets but that would involve 10,000 post cards of which is not free and thus the reason information is not made available to the public. Public charter schools have millions in their fund balance and millions to spend.

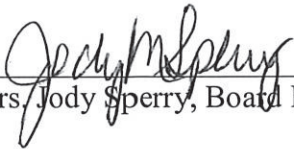
Mrs. Sperry agreed, and added we still need to get the message out to our representatives about unfunded mandates, teacher clearances expense, new teacher evaluations mandated with no additional monies to fund these added expenses. There are better ways to cut instead of continually asking the districts for more money.

Executive Session

Mrs. Sperry announced the Board would be going into an EXECUTIVE SESSION immediately following the meeting to review and discuss agency business which, if conducted in public, might lead to disclosure of information protected by law, issues might include personnel concerns.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:38 PM.



Mrs. Jody Sperry, Board President



Ms. Kara Onorato, Board Secretary