

# Conneaut School District

## PUBLIC WORK SESSION

### Minutes

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

7:00 PM

The Conneaut School Board of Directors met Wednesday, February 1, 2017 at the Conneaut Area Senior High School cafeteria.

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. Burnham	Mr. Ellis	Mr. Hornstein
Mrs. Klink	Mrs. Krachkowski	Mrs. Luckock
Mr. McQuiston	Mr. Schaeff	Mrs. Sperry

#### Administrators Present-

**Superintendent:** Jarrin Sperry

**Director of Special Education-** Susy Walters

**Business Manager-** Greg Mayle

**Curriculum Director-** Brenda Kantz

**Director of Buildings and Grounds-** Frank Kimmel

**Technology Coordinator –** Rick Kelly

**Principals:** John Hines, Doug Parks, Kevin Burns and Adam Jardina.

#### Visitor Recognition

Mrs. Sperry offered visitor recognition on Agenda Items 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.

It is noted there were no visitors.

#### Discussion Items-

1. *2017/2018 School Calendar-* Mr. Sperry presented a preliminary calendar for the 2017/2018 school year. He noted the proposal is very similar to our current year calendar. Students graduate on Friday and that is the teachers last day. Christmas is on a Monday with Christmas Eve on Sunday so contract issues are met with the holiday falling on a weekend. The Career Center is working with Mercer and Erie for a common work day for in service tech professionals. We removed an Act 80 day as were close in the high school in not meeting our 999 “c” hours. The proposal will go to the career center for review this month on the 14<sup>th</sup> and hopefully back to this board in March for approval.
2. *EnerNoc Discussion-* Mr. Kimmel brought the EnerNoc energy plan renewal to the board for review. He noted it is relatively the same proposal and the district solicitor has reviewed it. We will receive a return

rate, our payout in the first proposal was \$28,000 with no penalty. We receive real time data for each school and the program is free, the same as the initial proposal.

3. Class Rank Policy –

Mr. Sperry provided a District Administration Magazine article news update titled “Schools try to remove stress of class rankings; choosing K12 courses based on interests and skill over GPA requirements by Matt Zalznick, February 2017. He explained in our own district we talked about going back three or four years or even before consolidation in switching to GPA skills. In this two page article it discusses a high school in Nebraska switching to college rankings, of which Mr. Sperry is seeing more and more schools going away from class rank.

The Board discussed the process in moving forward, selecting a committee, conducting community meetings which would require board support. It would be moot point if the board did not support this avenue. Mr. Sperry supports this transition due to seeing more colleges looking at courses our students take rather than class rank or valedictorian, etc. In our current rank policy it is not fair to our students to compare them to a school such as McDowell or even Cochran. Schools now with class rank can be a negative.

Mr. McQuiston asked why we would choose to get rid of the class rank policy. Mr. Sperry feels it would eliminate competition and as Mrs. Krachkowski explained, it would provide a level of standard to achieve for individual students rather than striving to be number one in your school. Number one in our school does not compare to the valedictorian in a bigger or small school. In the past colleges gave full ride scholarships to a valedictorian but this is not the trend anymore. This should be a consideration when factoring our policy revision. Mrs. Sperry liked the idea of creating the idea on focus on learning rather than obtaining that “A”. It is a successful way of learning and achieves better note taking and studying skills. She sees the biggest issue in selling it to the community.

Mr. Sperry referenced our career and technical students as some of our most productive and successful ones but they can never be valedictorian due to the classes they can or cannot take. They have to take the core and cannot play the selection game.

Mrs. Krachkowski reminded the Board that during her participation in the BUSS Committee six years ago there was a community member involved who was misconstrued and thought only about the trophy. Mrs. Krachkowski reminded everyone that it is about rewarding individuals for their achievement in learning. We have the perfect atmosphere now to change the grading policy. Mr. Burnham disagreed; he feels it is for those that achieved the levels. His own sons were involved in the technical center and earned a salutatorian status but could not reach valedictorian because of the weighted classes needed.

Mr. Sperry noted that this would, and in no way mean weighted classes would go away, just the opposite as we would add more. It is something to think about but if we decide to not go in that direction it wouldn't behoove the policy committee to at least discuss it. If class rank was removed, it would still be necessary for some scholarships and for guidance counselors to be able to see the ranking. Mrs. Krachkowski agreed, some students still ask and higher education but it is not required. If the rank list gets out to students it would bear no importance. In conducting a teleconference with Stanford, they indicated their interest is in the resources made available to the student and what the student did with them/how creative they were with the resources.

Mrs. Luckock and Mr. Schaef both agreed that this is something worth researching. Mr. Schaef would like to see the ranges and what would be recommended for class speakers. With the advent of cyber schools students are motivated from the vo ag classes could use them to offset and be in the running if we stayed with valedictorian and salutatorian.

Mrs. Sperry asked, with the policy committee meeting next week did the board want a recommendation put together by the policy? Also she asked, is this something to be done with the community meetings this spring when discussing budget or separate? Mr. Sperry feels it is aggressive to do by this graduation class of 2018, possible but aggressive. We need community involvement therefore Mr. Schaef recommended providing a handout during a "one" night budget community meeting. He also suggested including the concept of the spring newspaper for the Superintendents Report to provide some information... trends in education as Mrs. Luckock put it.

4. *1<sup>st</sup> Reading of Policies* - Mrs. Kantz presented the policies for 1<sup>st</sup> reading as such;

Policy 216 – Student Records

\*Changes in language were made as concerned the A, B, and C files. They will now be referred to as Directory Information, Verified Education Records, and Preliminary Education Record. Mr. Joseph added sections for Health Records and Discipline Records

Policy 218 – Student Discipline

\*Minor edit under Parental Notification, we took out methods (phone, mail) since in all other steps of the process there is no listing of methods to accomplish any particular step.

Policy 218.1 – Behavior Management

\*Minor edits of obsolete strategies listed, added 'restraint in prone position' under Inappropriate Techniques and updated the PA Codes for all restraints.

Policy 218.2 – Rules for Student Conduct

\*Minor updates (beepers, pagers, etc) took out specified fine of \$50.00, replaced with "fine determined by District Magistrate, included e-cigarettes in 'possession of tobacco' section

Policy 218.4 – Terroristic Threats/Acts

\*Only change – we updated the definition of 'communicates' to include cell phones, email, social media and text

Policy 626.4 – Allowability of Costs for Federal Programs

\*last of the UGG. We did not have this policy in the past, while bits and pieces appear in various others, they are requiring it to be listed in one policy. We worked off a template provided by the Division of Federal Programs. Basically this policy spells out the cost principles and standards in expending federal funds. There were no changes by the committee or Mr. Joseph to the template. However except PA Code references were added by Mr. Joseph.

5. *Special Ed Cyber*- Mrs. Walters proposed to the Board a plan to compete with cyber schools in Pennsylvania for the special education students. She feels that if our District created our own special education cyber program we could keep our students under our enrollment. She has found many who have left in the past six months have come back with very few credits and behind their counterparts. In brainstorming with some high school teachers, they feel we can create the four core courses and three

electives to offer. We already have the physical education and health cyber. In keeping two or if we had one come back we would break even. If we brought two back we would be ahead.

Therefore, if the Board agrees with this we could add to the agenda in March to create the classes.

The Board asked if she felt there were two students that we lost and would come back. She replied, yes the last two we lost to cyber she is confident they would come back.

Mrs. Luckock feels it is a great idea and Mr. Schaef added that the more we can offer to keep them here along with what we learn about Pa Cyber the students are much better off.

Mrs. Sperry asked what our next steps are to move forward. Mr. Sperry replied, in March we approve to create the cyber classes with paying teachers 15 hours to create the class, as in the past. Then, as they teach it we can build the rest. We are not able to offer extended school year on cyber due to the guidelines which pertain to the course being an extension of what we presently have, we have to offer in the summer. It would be rare if a cyber student qualified for extended school year due to the rigors of Cyber School.

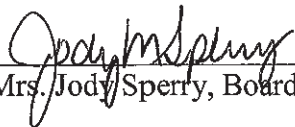
6. *Board Members up for Renewal-* Mrs. Sperry reminded the board of those whose term is up this year and read the guidelines for re-election. She also reminded them they will need to fill out two ethics forms.
7. *Superintendent's Report-*  
Mr. Sperry reported as follows;
  - IU5 Superintendent meeting was held January 11<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Pam Lenz was there to discuss the upcoming press release and talk also centered on the possible tax shift from property to income.
  - Jody and I submitted articles for the CASH Newspaper. Mine centered on cyber charters and the costs associated with them. I explained that it is not "Tuition Free", and in fact, costs district taxpayers quite a bit of money with very poor results.
  - On January 12<sup>th</sup>, I attended an assessment review of Edinboro University in regards to their student teaching preparatory programs and student teaching. Numerous education professionals from around the area were asked to take part in what they called, "Validity Day." Donna Miller, Superintendent from Girard and Ken Berlin, Superintendent from Wattsburg were also in attendance. Through a collaborative process, we discussed programming and assessment of college students in education programs with the intent to raise the rigor and provide better assessments.
  - I attended the SKILLS USA challenge at the New Castle school of Trades. Our students did very well. We finished the day with 7 GOLD, 10 SILVER, and 6 BRONZE winning students in various areas of competition. Kevin Sprong (the Executive Director) and I participated as patrons in a restaurant for the wait staff/culinary arts competition. Thirteen schools competed.
  - On Thursday, January 19<sup>th</sup>, Greg, Dave Schaef and I watched the presentation on the "Review and analysis of property tax-shift legislation." In short, the elimination of property taxes is a tax shift. The tax would shift to income taxes, and any extra expenses would go to referendum. Additionally, districts with debt (Conneaut is one) would keep property taxes until the debt is paid off. This means that taxpayers in districts with debt would not only still have property taxes, they would also have increases in personal income tax and an increase in the sales tax on goods purchased. I talked to Ed Albert (PARSS Executive Director) today and they are working on educating legislators about all the facets of what this legislation would bring. Also, after enacting this legislation, a \$1,000,000,000 (one billion) dollar deficit would be created in school funding within five years.

- On January 24<sup>th</sup>, Brenda Kantz and I met with retired state trooper Matt Harris. Trooper Harris started a program utilizing off duty State Troopers coming into schools to teach kids lessons on character. We had talked to Trooper Harris years ago, and the cost was just too great. However, a grant from Philadelphia has stepped in and the cost is now zero. Trooper Harris will be meeting with elementary and middle school principals on February 6<sup>th</sup> to discuss the program and figure out how we can deliver it to our students. The program covers 12 characteristics as part of the character education curriculum: grit, integrity, kindness, zest, self-regulation, fairness, hope, optimism, gratitude, bravery, curiosity and social intelligence.
  - On January 25<sup>th</sup>, Shane Murray, Bill Nichols, Donna Miller, Dr. Pam Lenz and I were at IU5 to participate in a press release regarding state funding and creating school budgets in these difficult times. Erie television stations were there along with the Erie Times. We each had about two minutes to speak and we each covered different topics. We all received positive feedback regarding the event.
8. *PSBA Updates* – Mr. Ellis announced several webinars and conferences coming up.
9. *Agenda Review*-  
The Board reviewed the draft agenda.

**Executive Session**

Mrs. Sperry noted the Board would be going into an **Executive Session** after the meeting is adjourned to discuss agency business, which, if conducted in public would violate a lawful privilege, specifically to discuss involving personnel matters.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mrs. Jody Sperry, Board President

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Greg Mayle, Board Secretary