

TIMBERLANE REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD
Atkinson, Danville, Plaistow, Sandown
New Hampshire

Regular Meeting
September 3, 2009
7:30 PM

SAU 55 Office
30 Greenough Road
Plaistow, NH

Call to Order

Madam Chair Kosta called this September 3, 2009 Timberlane Regional School Board meeting to order at 7:30 pm. Roll call was taken.

Board Members Present

Lori Aubrey, William Baldwin, Arlene Champey, Robert Collins, Elizabeth Kosta, Michael Mascola, John Paone, and Lisa Withee.

Absent: Louis Porcelli and Student Representative Holly Ange.

Administrators Present

Richard La Salle, Superintendent of Schools
Kelli Killen, Director of Elementary Education
Charles Coker, Director of Secondary Education
Scott Strainge, Curriculum Coordinator for Humanities, TRHS

Others Present

Jackie Efraimson, Student Council, TRHS

Pledge

Madam Chair Kosta led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes

The board reviewed both the public and non public minutes of the August 20, 2009 meeting. Corrections were noted.

MOTION: Mrs. Aubrey motioned to approve the public meeting minutes and the non public meeting minutes of August 20, 2009 meeting with corrections. Mr. Mascola seconded. With no further discussion, the motion carried 7-0 with one abstention (Baldwin).

Delegations and Individuals

Ms. Efraimson presented an update for the Student Council. She noted that preparations, including fundraising, are underway for Homecoming which will be celebrated the week of October 5th. Homecoming events shall consist of a carnival, pep rally, and a dance. She then encouraged students to apply for Mr. and Ms. Timberlane and that applications are available in Mrs. Libby's room. She noted that Spirit Week has been moved to the spring. She concluded the Council is excited to usher in another successful school year.

Current Business

Opening Day Report

Mrs. Killen reported that the opening day for elementary students went very well; all schools are up and running. She noted that enrollment numbers for this year are very similar to those of last year. She commended the staff for the buildings' wonderful condition in preparation for the 2009-10 school year. Each school held an open house prior to the start of school and both classrooms and programs were ready; again commendations to staff.

She then turned her report to the Title I program and noted that at the last school board meeting she neglected to report on the summer program. Sixty-two students in grades K-3 attended a 4-week session at Danville Elementary, Pollard School and Sandown North. Teachers and staff did a great job. She went on to say that the Title I grant was accepted by the state, to which they received commendation for the grant's content. Credit for this belongs to Patrice Liff, Nancy Barcelos and Kristen Pereira, district curriculum

coordinators. She noted that an onsite visit from the state is expected this school year.

In announcing her position as the District's homeless liaison, she noted that all homeless school-age children must attend school. She defined homeless as families living with relatives, in campgrounds, in vehicles or hotels, and even some foreclosure cases. She then asked that anyone facing these situations or knowing families that are, to please call their respective school guidance counselors.

Mr. Coker began his report of the opening of school for the secondary schools with quotes from building administrators: High School – smoothest opening in years; Middle School – smoothest opening in three years; and Performing Arts Center – smoothest opening in 20 years. He then commended all for their part in making this happen.

He went on to say that freshmen orientation was well attended – there were only 17 students who did not show. He extended accolades to Mrs. Gustavson for her work on the New Teacher Induction – new teachers were better prepared to enter the classroom this year than in previous years. He stated that the math lab is up and running and the freshmen advisor offered personalized tours to incoming freshmen to familiarize them with the building.

He then reported that the middle school staff was prepared for the emotional and social transitions for incoming sixth graders; seventh and eighth graders are veterans of the system. With the new PA system installed, announcements are able to reach all areas of the middle school. Coordination of the middle and high school music program schedules was excellent per compliments from the music director. Student interest in guitar prompted an increase in the guitar program and added a new guitar orchestra.

Mr. Coker noted that although there is still a line of traffic for morning drop off, the lines moved smoothly. The school resource officer assisted in directing traffic and will do so until a new crossing guard is added.

Mr. La Salle reported on the district-wide keynote speaker, Dr. Tim Tyson. As a former principal, Dr. Tyson's expertise is in the use of technology in education. He provided motivational ideas for catching up with students in using technology in the classroom; and using it productively and purposefully. The session was extremely informative. He went on to say that he has since seen teachers implement some of the ideas provided by Dr. Tyson.

Language Arts Implementation Plan Progress

Mrs. Killen distributed a guide for resources to implement the reading program. She noted the program consists of three one-year stages. The guide also indicates the stage where each grade level is, what has been completed, what is currently being done, and what is to be completed. She noted that kindergarten needs to be solid in its progression before adding another piece. They will work with a reading consultant this year and then a Reading Street consultant next year.

Mr. Collins stated that what was voted on at the last meeting relative to the approval of kindergarten curriculum is not being done. When the board voted to approve the purchase of the Reading Street program, the kindergarten curriculum was included. He asked what happened to the kindergarten portion.

Mrs. Killen responded that Mr. Collins' assessment is correct. The kindergarten portion was not purchased as was previously approved, however, the district was not charged for the kindergarten piece.

Mr. La Salle explained that the kindergarten purchase was dropped for implementation reasons – Timberlane's kindergarten program is a ½ day program and Reading Street is a full day program. Modifying the program to half day poses some unique challenges and they want to be sure it can be done successfully before taking it on. This was discussed with the curriculum committee but was not communicated effectively to the board.

Mrs. Killen stated the original cost including kindergarten was \$321k. The cost for the kindergarten piece alone was \$21k. With additional negotiation, they were able to purchase the program for \$298k (without kindergarten).

Responding to Mr. Collins' inquiry, Mr. La Salle stated there is still money in the curriculum fund. He went on to say that it was the district's intention to implement a grade 1-5 program not K-5 as the process to implement a kindergarten program is not ready. He then apologized for his omission to communicate this to

the board – though the documents presented for board approval reflected a program without kindergarten, it was not verbally communicated at the meeting.

Mr. Collins asked if the Read 180 funds were shifted to the ARRA funds. Mr. La Salle replied he is very confident this can be done; they are still in the submission process.

Truant Officer

Mr. Baldwin noted that this has been an issue for him for a few years now, and with the recent change in the law relative to the drop-out age, he sees this as a pressing matter. He cited RSA 189:34 which states School board *shall* appoint truant officers for their districts. He emphasized the word “shall” and noted this is not a choice; it is a directive. He stated the district needs to come up with a plan that includes a stipend that will reasonably attract candidates.

Mr. La Salle stated that he has surveyed other regional school districts and noted that they, because each district is made up of different juvenile courts, use a police officer from each of the district towns. He then went on to compare the traditional truant officer design (forceful grab, pick and drag a youngster to school) with a more modern model with comprehensive methods to work with student issues. Today, reasons for truancy might include addiction issues, dysfunctional family issues, depression, and personal issues – truancy cases are far more complicated than before.

In defining the role of a modern truant officer, Mr. La Salle stated he talked with the schools, the principals, assistant principals, and guidance counselors. The modern role of a truant officer also needs to be a liaison to the court. He went on to say he met with an organization out of Nashua who can provide a wide range of services tailored to the district’s needs. He expects a proposal from them in a few days. Options to fund this service include scaling back the services they might provided and using the \$1,100 stipend in the budget supplemented with a small fund allocation for this school year or, if the district can wait, they can budget for the service for the next school year. The range in cost is \$12k to \$32k, subject to the extent of the proposal.

Mr. Baldwin encouraged the board to meet their legal obligation in providing a truant officer. He very much likes the approach presented by the superintendent.

Mrs. Withee asked if they knew how much of the student population was affected by truancy. Mr. La Salle explained that there are two issues: one is an attendance issue, the other a truancy issue. Attendance issues for grades K-12 might be in the triple digits. Truancy cases that meet the criteria for violating the mandatory attendance law may be 6 to 12 students.

Mr. Mascola requested the statistical findings of Timberlane’s truancy/attendance data be presented at a future meeting.

Mrs. Champey asked how students who dropped out of school prior to the new law (drop out age to 18) and returned to school are doing. Mr. Coker responded that the high school has been in contact with those students and are working out a learning plan. The law does not require them to return to school, but to have a learning plan in place. In many cases the Evening Division is providing that.

Mrs. Champey then requested the superintendent come back with a quote of the number of students that fall into the 18 year old gap, the number of attendance issues, and actual truancy issues so that the board can offer an “in between” for now that can work into a full program next year.

Mr. Baldwin stated that the law enforcement community got together with the SRO and they all agreed to assist the district through their own communities. Mr. La Salle added that all the elementary school principals have indicated extreme cooperation from their police departments. Truancy is just another level of a child that needs to be serviced.

National Recognition

Mr. Strange reported that projects at the high school over the past year and a half continue to bring national and state recognition. He then proceeded to give a chronological report of events that led up to the student production of *Inherit the Wind* and documentaries titled, “A Sound of Fury,” “The Right To Be Wrong” and “What A Piece of Work is Man.” He shared about the numerous interviews conducted with prominent scientists, Pulitzer Prize winners, historians, philosophers, and educational and religious leaders as well as the amazing experiences in doing so that involved traveling to 8 different states. He credited the funding to

the American History Grant and the NH Humanities Counsel.

“What a Piece of Work Is Man” received the American Association State and Local History Award of Merit and was the only school to win that award out of 58 awards. They also won the ASLH WOW Award in which only 5 were given out this year. These prestigious awards have led to numerous other opportunities and invitations such as keynote speakers, to author historical magazine articles, participate in televised documentary presentations, partnerships for pilot programs, invitation to produce other documentaries, and more.

Mr. Strainge concluded his presentation by acknowledging that the most important thing to transpire from all of this effort was the request of approximately 25 students to start a short film and documentary class at school. The students’ interest and determination are the proudest achievements of all. He stated he turned this request over to Mr. Coker and Mr. La Salle and they allocated the funding and resources to build an editing suite at the high school. He publically thanked all who were involved with each of these projects; numerous technology staff members, teaching staff, and the students who put their power and energy into each project.

Board members expressed their congratulations with a round of applause.

National School Board Delegate

Madam Chair Kosta noted that the school board recently enrolled in the NSBA National Affiliate Program which will require a board member to serve as the National Affiliate Advocacy Network (NAAN) representative. She noted the role and responsibility of the representative shall include: taking a lead role in NSBA’s Campaign on the Image of Public, getting involved in national grassroots campaigns on key educational issues, keeping the board informed on critical national issues and federal legislation that impact public education, and responding to NSBA’s calls for information about how national trends or proposed federal legislation is impacting your district.

Mr. Mascola requested more information prior to committing any member to the position. Mr. La Salle will provide this at the next board meeting.

Administrators Report

Presidential Address to Students: Mr. La Salle noted that a common area of interest is the upcoming president’s address to classrooms across the country on Tuesday, September 8th at noon. This appears to have created a stir among some of the local residents relative to the terms of the appropriateness of the message. He stated that districts are responding in different ways, with some leaving the decision to view the address at the building level and some putting an elective process in place for parents who chose to restrict their child from its viewing. He called an emergency administrator’s meeting in which a parent letter was drafted to go out SAU-wide. He then read into the minutes the content of the letter as follows:

As many of you have heard, President Obama will be addressing the students of the Country on Tuesday, September 8, 2009 at 12:00 PM. The Office of the President has asked all schools to provide the opportunity for all students to view and participate in this broadcast. The anticipated message of the President’s speech is to emphasize the importance of education and to encourage all students to strive to be the best that they can be. The School District certainly supports this message and feels that this message delivered consistently and repeatedly by all adults in a position to influence students is both commendable and essential to the student’s personal development and growth.

Having said this, the District has a standing practice of reviewing and/or verifying the content presentations prior to making them available to students. Furthermore, the District is respectful of student instructional time and the individual wishes of parents relative to non-curricular messages. Students will not routinely be participating in this broadcast other than in select curricular areas where the nature of the broadcast directly relates to the curriculum and classroom purpose. In these selective areas we will be recording the broadcast and we will delay the student presentation by a minimum of one day. We will notify parents of our intentions to share the presentation and will allow parents to have their child opt out if desired.

We encourage families to record this presentation if they have this capability and to share it in their family as they deem appropriate. We are confident that the President will deliver a worthwhile and historic message to students but we believe this message is best delivered and shared in the home with

family guidance.

He then asked for the board's approval to distribute to each student tomorrow at school.

Mr. Mascola inquired to the procedure should parents wish to opt out. Mr. La Salle replied that he expects only a small number of students to watch the address as the class will need to be central to the message of good citizenship – more appropriate for a civics class, etc. Permission slips will be required and students opting out will be given an alternate lesson. Discussion then centered on this being an historical event (the president's live broadcast into the classroom) and that given the availability to record and view it at another time (later broadcasts, streaming video, etc), it addresses the concern that students might completely miss the opportunity to see it.

The consensus of the board was to approve the letter as written and distribute to students as presented.

Language Arts Implementation: Mr. La Salle noted that the language arts program implementation is resource intensive and as such extra hands are needed to do it properly. He stated that Pollard School has had an extra administrator for two reasons:

1. Pollard was once the largest elementary school in the district. It is now the same size as the others.
2. Pollard used to be a school in need of improvement but now its performance is up to the other elementary schools.

He has since gone ahead and redirected ½ of the curriculum coordinator to assist the Director of Elementary Education with district implementation of the language arts program.

EEE and N1H1 Update: Mr. La Salle turned the floor over to Mr. Coker who provided a report of the EEE (Eastern Equine Encephalitis) threat as announced by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) this past week whereby mosquitoes in both the towns of Sandown and Hampstead tested positively for the disease. An informational letter went out to students with tips on staying protected as well as links to other websites providing additional information. He also reported that 5 meetings were held relative to H1N1. He noted that the CDC (Center for Disease Control) and Dr. Montiero from the State differ somewhat on their H1N1 information as the CDC views the potential outbreak in national and international terms while Dr. Montiero is providing basically New Hampshire information.

He then noted a SharePoint site has been set up where board members can have access if they wish. He offered the following prevention strategies:

1. Proper hand washing
2. Cough and sneeze etiquette
3. Staying home

All buildings will be showing the cough and sneeze video as well as displaying posters. As far as attendance is concerned, staff members have both annual sick time accrual and access to the sick bank. Should attendance become an issue for students, parents are encouraged to work with the assistant principals who have been directed to be flexible with homework. Other means of prevention include the cleaning of common areas, the encouragement to not share drinks, food, utensils and personal items, and the use of paper cups. Staff and students are recommended to get a flu shot. Those with medical concerns should contact their healthcare provider. He went on to say there are no plans for social distancing and no plans to close schools.

Mr. Collins asked if members of the public could have access to the SharePoint site to which Mr. Coker responded there is an area on the district website already designated for this information.

Early Graduation Students: Mr. La Salle announced that 10 students have met the requirements for early graduation; five of those students to graduate a semester early and the other five to graduate a full year early.

MOTION: *Mrs. Champey motioned to approve the early graduation of the following fourth year students who have completed the early graduation appeals process to graduate in January 2010: Maranda Blanchette, Louise Botting, Rebecca Green, Jesse LoCascio and Gabriella Zarba. Lisa Withee seconded. With no further discussion the motion passed unanimously (8-0).*

MOTION: Mrs. Champey motioned to approve the early graduation of the following third year students who have completed the early graduation appeals process to graduate in June 2010: Leeann Kinsler-Swan, Samantha Morrison, Nicole Paris, Ashleigh Reed, and Shannon Valley. Lisa Withee seconded. With no further discussion the motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Board members expressed congratulations wishes to the students.

Personnel Report

Mr. La Salle recommended the board approve the nominations of Judith Joy to the 60% Health and Technology position at Sandown North and Paula Polito as the Special Education Individualized Home Program Teacher at Atkinson Academy.

MOTION: Mr. Mascola motioned to approve the nominations of Judith Joy to the 60% Health and Technology position at Sandown North and Paula Polito as the Special Education Individualized Home Program Teacher at Atkinson Academy. Mrs. Champey seconded. With no further discussion the motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Committee Reports

Mrs. Withee announced the Facilities Committee will hold its first meeting of the school year on Tuesday, September 8th at 8:30 am at the SAU with the annual facilities tours on September 10th, 6:45 pm at the Middle School, PAC and High School, September 15th at 6:00 pm at Danville Elementary, Sandown North and Sandown Central, and on September 15th at 6:00 pm at Pollard School and Atkinson Academy. These tours are open to the public.

Mrs. Aubrey reported she had an opportunity to volunteer at the High School's orientation night and found it to be very well attended. She thanked the PTSA for providing the refreshments.

Mr. Collins announced the Community Relations Committee is scheduled to meet just prior to the next school board meeting on September 17th. The next Policy Committee meeting is September 16th. He then inquired about the High School's NEASC recommendations follow up. Mr. Coker replied that the update will be presented to the curriculum and assessment committee first and then it will go to the school board.

Mr. Collins then asked if there has been any progress on Robert's Rules training for the board. Madam Chair Kosta responded not as of yet. She then announced that the Curriculum Committee meets on Wednesday, September 9th at 6:30 pm.

Correspondence

Two emails were recognized with both provided written responses.

Vendor and Payroll

Done

Other

Mr. Coker announced that all committee meetings are posted on the district website. With no further business before the board, Madam Chair Kosta adjourned the meeting at 9:12 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Catherine Belcher
Secretary Pro Tem