

**APPROVED  
MINUTES  
BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING  
September 21, 2015**

**PLACE:**

Darien Board of Education  
Meeting Room  
7:30 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Ms. Hagerty-Ross, Chair; Mesdames Stein, Zuro, McNamara and Sullivan; and Messrs. Harman, Burke, and Dineen.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Mr. Martens.

**ADMINISTRATION PRESENT:**

Dr. Dan Brenner, Superintendent; Dr. Susie DaSilva, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction; Ms. Shirley Klein, Assistant Superintendent of Special Education and Student Services; Mr. Michael Feeney, Director of Finance and Operations; Ms. Marjorie Cion, Director of Human Resources.

**VISITORS:**

Approximately 35.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Hagerty-Ross called the meeting to order at 7:37 p.m. and said that the next regular Board of Education meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m. in the Board Meeting Room.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Brenner announced that Darien had five National Merit Semi-Finalists: Sarishka Desai, Kristen Moran, Claire O'Leary, Katie Tsui, and Chloe Zhou. Four of the finalists were presented to the Board in person (one had a previous commitment). Dr. Brenner noted this was a remarkable achievement.

Dr. Brenner said the new website was up and said he welcomed feedback and suggestions.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Special Meeting of September 8, 2015**

- \*\* MS. STEIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING AND EXECUTIVE SESSION OF SEPTEMBER 8, 2015.
- \*\* MR. BURKE SECONDED THE MOTION.
- \*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

### Regular Meeting of September 8, 2015

- \*\* MR. DINEEN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 8, 2015.
- \*\* MR. BURKE SECONDED THE MOTION.
- \*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

### BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

There were no committee reports at this time.

### PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### A) UPDATE/REPORT ON SBAC, CAPT AND CMT RESULTS (FILE #2404)

Dr. DaSilva spoke to a PowerPoint presentation on the district's SBAC, CAPT and CMT results. She cautioned that many variables can affect a child's performance and school rankings, including, but not limited to, the time of year the tests were taken, participation rates, other test conditions, and the frame of mind of the student. She noted there were areas for improvement and the tests could be useful and represent one data point taken into consideration regarding student performance.

Board Questions/Discussion and Administration's responses:

**a) An inevitable question will be: will these scores be used for placement?** (Dr. DaSilva replied the tests were just one data point in conjunction with many. Dr. Brenner replied with just one year of data, and uncertainty about the validity and reliability of the tests, it is being determined on how best to utilize test data in terms of placement.) **b) When you look at ELA they are pretty consistent across grade levels, on the math it starts higher and then drops down to about 65%, have you got any feedback about this?** (Dr. DaSilva replied results were currently being investigated and analyzed, and agreed that it was important to look at the math curriculum. Dr. Brenner added if you look at data, and then look at the middle school and where tests are at the highest of levels, and then drop off at the high school. How is it possible the leap can be so great from 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade and then drop so sharply from middle school to high school? We are looking at these inconsistencies.) **c) Who actually decides what the scales are with the grade? Is it the State or Pearson?** (Dr. DaSilva said the scores were decided by a general consortium of professionals. She said the consortium advised that children can have different results each test, for example just be a few questions away from a 3 rating. Scores are rated the same across the state.) **d) What should concerned parents do about test scores?** (Dr. DaSilva replied parents should wait for upcoming individual school based presentations, and if they still have concerns, they should speak to their school principal. Dr. Brenner said it does not make sense to speak to this year's teachers who have just had the children for a short period of time; that it was best to speak to the

principal.) e) **Dr. Brenner and I heard the State Commissioner of Education at a recent C.E.S. meeting in Shelton. The Commissioner said the test results were only as good as the students who took them and scores can be affected if students opt out. Do we know how many students opted out of the tests?** (Mr. Marin replied he had filed a report in mid-June and he said at the high school level for ELA there was 89% participation, and for Math a week later when things were catching on, participation dropped to approximately 80%. He said only one student opted out at the elementary school level, and at the middle school a very small number of students opted out as well. District wide participation was at 98%.) f) **Can you explain why the tests are untimed? Will they remain untimed?** (Dr. DaSilva said the tests were designed to be untimed as the tests were meant to measure creative problem solving. She said most of the students finished within the allotted time, and the plan was for the tests to remain untimed. Dr. Brenner added the tests were designed to challenge the student's ability to go above grade level, which requires more time to allow students to excel.) g) **Can you explain the tests that will be administered next year?** (Dr. DaSilva explained that at the high school level, the SBAC tests will not be administered next year and instead will be the SAT.) h) **Are other states administering the SAT in place of other tests?** (Dr. Brenner said he did not know but in theory it made a lot of sense, but could be difficult in practice. Students often take the test multiple times, so that is one issue, of how the scores are reported. Mr. Marin said the proposal for the SAT will be presented to the state in October with a March administration and there were many logistics to be worked out. Dr. Brenner noted further complications including the fact that the College Board does not always follow IEP stipulations.)

## **B. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON 2014-15 FINAL YEAR END FINANCIAL REPORT (FILE #2405)**

Mr. Feeney spoke to a PowerPoint presentation outlining the 2014-2015 budget. He noted the district spent \$86,620,695 with a \$46,196.00 surplus.

- \*\* MR. HARMAN MOVED THAT THE BUDGET SURPLUS FROM THE 2014-2015 SCHOOL YEAR OF \$46,196 BE RETURNED TO THE TOWN OF DARIEN.**
- \*\* MR. DINEEN SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- \*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## **C. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE RELEASE OF BUDGET CONTROL POSITIONS 2015-2016 FISCAL YEAR**

Dr. Brenner noted that this budget adjustment was based on a review of IEPs and it was determined a 1.3 position increase was needed for special education teachers.

- \*\* MS. SULLIVAN MOVED TO RELEASE 1.3 BUDGET CONTROL POSITIONS FOR THE 2015-2016 FISCAL YEAR.**
- \*\* MS. STEIN SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- \*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

### **ACTION ITEMS**

#### **a. PERSONNEL ITEMS (FILE #2406)**

- i. Appointments
- ii. Resignations

**\*\* MR. DINEEN MOVED TO APPROVE THE PERSONNEL ITEMS AS PRESENTED.**  
**\*\* MR. BURKE SECONDED.**  
**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Ms. Jill McCammon, Old Kings Highway South, said she was excited that parent sessions about the SBAC testing would be held at the schools this year. She said she wanted to know how information on the school based meetings would get out to everyone and if information on how parents could express their concerns about test scores could also be included. She said she also wanted to know if analysis of test results included an in-depth look at special education students in terms of results and accommodations.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* MS. STEIN MOVED TO ADJOURN.**  
**\*\* MR. DINEEN SECONDED THE MOTION.**  
**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Schneider Zuro  
Secretary