

**APPROVED  
MINUTES  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
October 13, 2015**

**PLACE:**

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

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

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

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Ms. Sullivan.

**ADMINISTRATION PRESENT:**

Dr. Dan Brenner, Superintendent of Schools; 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 25.

**CALL TO ORDER.**

Ms. Hagerty-Ross called the meeting to order at 7:37 p.m. She said the next Regular BOE meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 27, 2015 at 7:30 p.m. in the Board of Education Meeting Room.

**CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT.**

Ms. Hagerty-Ross greeted everyone and wished the community a Happy Columbus Day.

**PUBLIC COMMENT.**

There was no one who wished to address the Board at this time.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT.**

Dr. Brenner said that he had attended the Homecoming Game and also was able to attend a DHSPA program where parents of students who had completed the college application and selection process shared their thoughts and reflections. On October 12th, the District had a very successful Professional Development Day. He asked Dr. DaSilva to address the Board about the program.

Dr. DaSilva reported that the program was geared toward all three levels of education and a significant part of the program was having the teachers' voices heard. A feedback survey after an August Professional

Development program indicated that there were needs and wants from the teaching staff. These were addressed and choices were provided for Professional Development in advance. Those teachers who were not able to attend all the courses they wanted had access to the materials. Plans are going forward for the next Professional Development Day scheduled for November 3rd.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES.**

#### **Minutes of the Special Meeting and Executive Session of September 21, 2015.**

- \*\* MS. STEIN MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING AND EXECUTIVE SESSION OF SEPTEMBER 21, 2015.**
- \*\* MR. HARMAN SECONDED.**
- \*\* THE MOTION PASSED WITH SEVEN IN FAVOR AND ONE ABSTENTION (MARTENS).**

#### **Minutes of the Special Meeting of September 21, 2015.**

- \*\* MS. MCNAMARA MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 21, 2015.**
- \*\* MR. DINEEN SECONDED.**
- \*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 21, 2015 AS SUBMITTED PASSED WITH SEVEN IN FAVOR AND ONE ABSTENTION (MARTENS).**

### **BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS.**

**Budget Committee** – Mr. Harman reported that the Committee had met on October 8, 2015 to review the financial reports. These will be presented by Mr. Feeney later in the meeting. He said there were discussions about several of the accounts along with a discussion on RC-24 and the projected expenses for the contract services and out of district services. These will be monitored closely. The next Budget meeting is scheduled for November 5, 2015.

Ms. Zuro stated that she had attended the Homecoming Events during the weekend and thanked the administration and staff for all their hard work in preparation, supervision, and clean up. The students were very positive about the experience.

### **PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSIONS.**

#### **A. PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON PROPOSED OVERNIGHT FIELD TRIPS. (FILE # 2407)**

Dr. DaSilva came forward and gave an overview of the thirteen overnight field trips. She said that there were a number of quiz bowl trips that were pending the students transitioning to the various levels.

- \*\* MR. HARMAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED OVERNIGHT FIELD TRIPS, AS DESCRIBED BY DR. DASILVA.**
- \*\* MR. MARTENS SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**B. REPORT ON TESTING – SAT, ACT AND AP (FILE # 2408)**

Dr. Brenner gave an overview of the SAT, ACT and AP Testing Scores for the last five years. He reviewed the various scores and District placement.

**Board questions and comments and Administration’s responses: a) Do we also look at the number of students in our high school that have disabilities and their participation and achievement rates in AP courses? Is this something that might be worthwhile to look at over time?** (Dr. Brenner said that it would be worthwhile and explained that he did not have the information with him at the meeting. The numbers are disaggregated not only by ethnicity, but also by ability. This information is available. Dr. Brenner added that one of his goals was to have every student graduate from high school with one AP. Research suggests that the District would be educating their students if that is one of the goals. While it may not be discussed tomorrow or next year, it is a lofty goal to discuss. It requires supporting the students in very real ways, but there is something to be said for keeping the bar high and helping the students achieve at that level regardless of who they are and what they may bring to the table.) **b) Since we have never seen this before, do you have the ability to look at past years to see if we are consistent?** (Dr. Brenner said that he could access that information for the Board. This type of information is something that people often gloss over. It’s not being kept from people but is something that does not often frame a conversation.) **c) This is something that would come out in July or August so it would be left out.** (Yes, it would be left out. We’re looking at last year’s data and the scores come out during the first week of July. Because of this, it is often left off the table. I tend to look for it because it tells a different story.) **d) Going back to the AP Participation Summary, do you have any comments about the amount of participation? Regarding your comment before about having the students take one AP, what are your thoughts?** (Dr. Brenner said that he had not dug down into the data, but felt that the District could challenge themselves a bit more. However, this is a culture change. Often the students can be challenged in their senior year, but it doesn’t have to be with AP Chem. There is a large range of differentiation in AP courses. An AP Psych class is not an AP Chem or Physics. There are different ways for a student to stick his/her foot in the water. An AP class, for the most part, is the first semester class that a student would take in college. If the District could help a student take that kind of college 101 class in high school with support and give them the confidence to be successful, we would be doing them a great service when they leave. The students would be taking the course over a year, rather than over a semester. If there are challenges and they get enough support to complete the course, the District will have done them a great service. When one looks at the 362, it’s important to remember that these AP classes are currently designed in such a way that this is a very respectable number as it stands. Redesigning the classes will require a bit of a paradigm shift. It’s a long term goal.)

**C. REPORT ON 2015-2016 DISTRICT BUDGET AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON BUDGET TRANSFERS. (FILES # 2409 AND 2410)**

Mr. Feeney came forward and presented a PowerPoint report to the Board. Dr. Brenner then recapped the budgeted and actual spending figures for the previous year, including the open and pending contracts. He cautioned the Board members that the Excess Cost funds were not included in the calculations. Last year, there was 2.8 million that came back to the District from Excess Costs. This year, the budget for Excess Costs was set at 1.8 million. There is a sense that there is a delta inside of the Excess Costs that should provide some relief.

Dr. Brenner said that the administration wanted to put this out in front now because a great deal of analysis has been done on this, starting when Dr. Brenner arrived. He said that the administration wanted to make sure that the Board was fully aware. There were many things occurring in the District in regards to Special Education. However, the administration did not want much of the school year to go by without giving some real, quantifiable numbers on the table. These figures will be monitored month to month and the Board will receive updates on this situation. Given the current budget and what the administration anticipates in Excess Costs, Dr. Brenner said that he believes that the District will manage this inside of the current budget with no impact on the education that the Board had hoped to deliver when the budget was created with all students in mind. If this changes, the Board will be informed.

**Board questions and comments and Administration's responses: a) Do you think that over the next several years, with the cursory look that you have had, that there are savings to be had by doing some of this in house or is it too early to decide?** (Dr. Brenner said that the hope was that the District would build a robust program inside of the school that people are anxious to be part of. Part of this will be done with staff and part will be done with outside consultants. The goal is to have the District have these robust programs and then the numbers will naturally diminish.)

Mr. Feeney came forward to give an overview of the budget transfers and indicated where the changes were made.

**\*\* MR. HARMAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE BUDGET TRANSFERS DATED OCTOBER 8, 2015.**

**\*\* MR. DINEEN SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### **D. UPDATE MASTER AGENDA AND PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION OF 2016-2017 BUDGET CALENDAR. (FILE # 2411)**

Dr. Brenner presented the Updated Master Agenda to the Board Members.

**Board questions and comments and Administration's responses: a) On October 27th, Is there any issue in particular regarding the Curriculum Update?** (Dr. DaSilva stated that the administration would be presented updates on SRBI for the elementary and middle schools as well as the high school. Dr. Brenner said that the administration will have the enrollment projections ready for the 27th, but may not have the Space Utilizations completed.) **b) We have to do a five year financial projection. I would assume it is for the 10th so we can use the enrollment numbers and so we can share it with the Board of Finance for the State of the Town report.** **c) Is the Title 1 grant late because we usually do it in October?** (Dr. DaSilva explained that the grant was not late. The State has not opened the site up for sending in the information at this time. However, the information is ready to go when the State does allow the District to submit information.)

#### **E. ACCEPTANCE OF THE PROPERTY AT 32 HOYT STREET DEDICATED TO SCHOOL USE BY THE REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 28, 2015.**

Ms. Hagerty-Ross stated that on September 28th, the RTM has voted to give care, custody and control of the property at 32 Hoyt Street to the Board of Education.

**\*\* MR. DINEEN MOVED TO ACCEPT THE CARE, CUSTODY AND CONTROL OF THE PROPERTY AT 32 HOYT STREET DEDICATED TO SCHOOL USE BY THE REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 28, 2015.**

**\*\* MR. HARMAN SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

### **ACTION ITEMS**

#### **A. PERSONNEL ITEMS (FILE # 2412)**

##### **i. Teacher Administrator Appointments**

Ms. Cion said that there was a revised Personnel Action listing, which she passed out to the Board members. Dr. Brenner explained that the TBD were dependent on the Board's approval and the candidates' release dates from their current positions.

Dr. Brenner then announced that the administration would be adding three new staff members: Ms. Linda Johnson, a K-5 Math and Science Supervisor; Dr. Scott McCarthy, a psychologist who will assume the position of Program Director; and finally, Ms. Cory Gillette now as a K-5 ELA and Social Studies Supervisor.

**\*\* MS. MCNAMARA MOVED TO APPROVE THE PERSONNEL ACTION ITEM DATED OCTOBER 13, 2015.**

**\*\* MR. BURKE SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

##### **ii. Resignations**

There were no items to consider at this time.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Jay Hardison, of Nearwater Lane, came forward and stated that he was on the RTM Education Committee. He said that he had emailed Ms. Hagerty-Ross a few days ago about having a meeting with the BOE, but did not receive a response. Ms. Hagerty-Ross said that she had been out of town but would discuss it with the other Board members and get back to him.

Mr. Hardison asked if there had been any progress made on the other two incidents. Ms. Hagerty-Ross explained that the public could make comments, but that the Board does not answer questions from the public.

Mr. Hardison said that it was his understanding that one or potentially two security employees at the high school were reprimanded for trying to stop Dr. Brenner, who didn't have the proper identification from entering the building. Mr. Hardison asked if this was correct. Ms. Hagerty-Ross said that this was a personnel issue. Mr. Hardison said that he was just asking and stated the employees were reprimanded by Principal Dunn. Ms. Hagerty-Ross said that the Board could not comment. Mr. Hardison said that the two people were doing their job and should be commended by the Board of Education, not chastised for keeping unknown individuals out of the building.

Ms. Jill McCammon of Old Kings Highway South, came forward to address the Board. She said that there was a budget calendar date for a Special Meeting for a Special Education update, which she is happy to see. She asked if the Special Education update could be put on the regular calendar and not on the budget calendar.

**ADJOURNMENT.**

**\*\* MR. MARTENS MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**\*\* MS. MCNAMARA SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Sarah Schneider Zuro  
Secretary