

Suffield, Connecticut

Board of Education Meeting  
December 6, 2011

Call to Order

Superintendent of Schools, Karen Baldwin, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Suffield Middle School Media Center. Present: Board members Robert Eccles, Lori D'Ostuni, Sue Porcello, Mary Lou Sanborn, Michelle Zawawi, George Beiter, Jeanne Gee and Scott Schneider; Director of Fiscal Administration, Ed Basile and observers.

The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Election of Officers

The Superintendent opened the meeting for election of Board of Education Officers.

- Chairperson of the Board  
**MOTION #11-073:** Sanborn moved, D'Ostuni seconded **to nominate Sue Porcello as Board of Education Chair.** The motion passed unanimously.

The Superintendent turned the meeting over to the new Chair.

Chair Porcello thanked former Chair, Mary Roy, for her service to the Board over the past eighteen months and welcomed the new Board of Education members.

- Vice Chairperson of the Board  
**MOTION #11-074:** D'Ostuni moved, Schneider seconded **to nominate Mary Lou Sanborn as Vice Chair of the Board of Education.** The motion passed unanimously.
- Secretary of the Board  
**MOTION #11-075:** Gee moved, Eccles seconded **to nominate Lori D'Ostuni as Secretary of the Board of Education.** The motion passed unanimously.

Communications

- The Superintendent reported that former Board of Education member, Lauren Life, had sent a letter of thanks to the Board for their gift presented at the November 15 meeting.
- Chair Porcello cited a need for some kind of standard to be used in sharing any Board communications. She asked board members to send her protocol ideas.

Public Comment

None

Approval of Minutes

Eccles moved, D'Ostuni seconded to approve the minutes of the November 15, 2011 and November 21, 2011 meetings as amended to add Michael Smith's name to those present at the November 21<sup>st</sup> meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

### Discussion/Action Items

- Changes to 11/12 School Calendar

The loss of six (6) instructional days due to Storm Alfred has resulted in the need to revise the 11/12 school calendar. The Superintendent recommended changes as follows:

- Add three (3) instructional days to February 2012: February 22, 23, 24
- Adjust March 26, 2012 to an instructional day (change from Professional Development)
- Add two (2) instructional days to April 2012: April 16 and 17

A survey was taken of parents and staff members in order to allow stakeholders to have input in this process. Survey results from over 970 parents and 256 staff were shared with the Board of Education. The Superintendent reported that the Suffield Education Association (SEA) indicated that they were not in favor of having days taken from February vacation. She stated the SEA leadership preferred days from April and extending the June calendar. Survey results, however, show that the majority of respondents preferred taking days from February.

**MOTION #11-076:** Eccles moved, Gee seconded to **adjust the 11/12 school calendar per the recommendations of the Superintendent.**

Board Chair Porcello questioned whether more dates should be taken from April. Board member Zawawi noted the school calendar statement that days would be taken from April and would that cause problems with the union. Board member Eccles reminded the Board that the SEA raised similar concerns last year when the Board followed the stated plan and reduced dates from April vacation. Eccles encouraged the Board to make the decision tonight rather than table.

Board member D'Ostuni asked if keeping intact one full week of vacation would be better than affecting both February and April. She acknowledged board member Gee's point that the calendar is created with a full week in mind but that this year is not a normal year. There was a brief discussion.

The motion passed unanimously.

### Consent Agenda

Board member Eccles explained the concept of the Consent Agenda to the new Board members. The Director of Fiscal Administration went over the October financial statements in respect to how Storm Albert impacted some of the accounting on the statement. He explained that the power outage from the storm resulted in the non-certified salary line item to show a deficit. This would have been corrected by releasing encumbered monies the day after payday, but due to no power, this could not be done. The November financial statement will show the correction, and the account is not in deficit.

**MOTION #11-076:** Sanborn moved, Eccles seconded to **approve the October Financial Reports.** The motion passed unanimously.

## Reports to the Board

### Superintendent's Report

- The Superintendent and Suffield High School Principal, Donna Hayward, reported on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and Secondary School Reform. This report presented the changes being made by the state to graduation requirements and the changes, to date, at the high school to meet these new requirements along with revision to the Common Core State Standards that will affect teaching at all levels. Additionally, the report included how CCSS and Secondary School Reform are connected to 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills and the high school accreditation program. Instructional shifts are underway in classrooms at Suffield High School to meet the challenges presented by these upcoming changes. Board member Sanborn asked if a sample lesson could be shown so the Board of Education could see application of the Common Core State Standards in the classroom. This will be added as a future agenda item.
- The Superintendent reported that action plans (the 100 day priorities and the three year plan) at the school and district levels are in development as a result of the Special Education Review held recently. She expects to have feedback on these plans before the holidays and should be able to share that information with the Board of Education in January.

### Chair's Report

- The Chair will be meeting with the Superintendent on Thursday to review Board Subcommittee assignments. She asked all Board members to indicate at least two Subcommittees they would be interested in serving on and asked that any questions for the Superintendent be sent to the Chair before the Thursday meeting.
- A Tri-Board meeting (Board of Finance, Board of Selectmen, Board of Education) has been called for December 19, 7 p.m. For a true tri-board meeting, board member Eccles stated that each Board Chair needs to call the meeting of their own members. The Board of Education tri-board notification will be taken care of with town hall.
- Work continues on the Strategic Planning Committee. A survey will be sent to the community in the next week or so and posted on the district website to assess the strengths of the district and to gauge community perception.

### Subcommittee Reports

- Policy Subcommittee – Board member D'Ostuni explained to the board the process for policy development and approval. The following policies were placed on the table for first read:
  - 4131 – Staff Development
  - 5131.911 – Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy and Safe School Climate Plan

### Future Business

The Board decided to hold a retreat/workshop this month on December 20, 6:30 p.m.

- District Technology Systems: Update on security and implementation of best practices
- Report on Updates to District Crisis Manual
- Common Core State Standards and SPS Curriculum Implementation (sample lesson)
- Blum Shapiro Update
- Report on Updates to District Crisis Manual
- 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Technology Course
- Teen Safety Initiatives
- Writers' Workshop
- Gender Gap
- Special Education Action Plan Development

Public Comment

None

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori D'Ostuni  
Secretary

LD/ajk