

**TORRINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, November 20, 2013
Torrington High School
Major Besse Drive**

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:03 P.M.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call:

Present: Mrs. Cappabianca, Mr. Cavagnero (arrived at 7:10), Mrs. Hoehne (arrived at 8:00), Mr. Kissko, Mr. Merola, Mr. Nargi, Mr. Rovero, Mr. Thibault, Mr. Traub, Mrs. Batchelder, Mr. Campolieta, Mrs. Kloczko, Julissa Martinez

Absent: Mr. Brady, Mayor Zordan

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY SESSION

Mr. Traub read aloud the purpose and rules of the School/Community Session.

There was one (1) speaker, Darlene Battle.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Traub made a motion to amend the agenda by adding item 4.L, Turf Committee Representative and item 6.8, Appointment of Turf Committee Representative; and to approve the amended agenda. Mr. Thibault seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

INFORMATION SHARING AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Student Representative Reports

Julissa Martinez reported.

B. Superintendent Report

1. Status of Security Grant

Mrs. Kloczko reported.

2. Results of Torrington's Birth through 8 Plan (TECC)

Mrs. Kloczko presented.

3. Grant Update

Mrs. Kloczko updated the Board.

C. DMV Report- All Star Transportation

Mrs. Batchelder reported to the Board.

Mr. Traub asked if the secondary bus company was listed in the report.

D. Secretarial Professional Development Results – Final Site – TPS Website

Mrs. Kloczko presented.

E. Four (4) Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate

Mrs. Kloczko reported.

Mr. Kissko asked if the percentage between graduating males and females was consistent throughout the state.

Mr. Cavagnero asked what attributed to the increase in graduation rates. He asked when the Freshman Academy was initiated. He then asked about allegations of teachers being bullied by an administrator to change grades. Mr. Cavagnero voiced his concerns about data being changed and Common Core Standards. He asked why they should restructure when they had a seven (7) percent increase in graduation rates. He asked about the rigorousness of the online learning program.

Mr. Nargi asked about summer school attributing to the graduation rate increase. He said teachers have told him they do not see a student's grades or attendance on the student's official transcript; he asked if this was correct. He spoke about transparency in ensuring a student's grade is not being changed.

Mrs. Pollutro spoke about teachers and administrators rights and official transcripts in Power School.

Mr. Traub suggested the Board bring in the Director of the Guidance Department to explain their part of the process of student's grades. He also said they should find out what the legal rights are to the parties involved in an official transcript.

Mr. Merola asked Mr. Cavagnero and Mr. Nargi if they both have heard from faculty that grades are being changed. He voiced his concerns regarding the seriousness of the situation and said the people making these claims have a responsibility to come forward. Mr. Merola also said they should be proud of an increase in graduation rates. He then stated that the Administration did not cost the District thousands of dollars in an investigation into a Board member; the Board voted to have the investigation.

Mr. Kissko asked for clarification about a person being able to change a grade once it has been entered.

F. Efficiencies of Board of Education, 2013-2014

Mrs. Batchelder reported.

Mr. Nargi asked about retirements and health insurance.

Early retirement costs and the salary surplus were discussed.

Mr. Kissko asked how they decide which positions to fill.

Mr. Rovero stated this is a great example of the Administration and the Union working together; the Union should be recognized.

G. Budget Development Process & Calendar for 2014-2015

Mrs. Batchelder presented.

H. Bullying Prevention, Intervention and Safe School Climate Policy

Mr. Campolieta presented.

Mr. Merola informed the Board they will be adding language into the Policy.

I. Chemical Health Policy for Student Athletes

Mr. Campolieta reported.

Mr. Nargi stated his concerns regarding this policy. He disagrees with consequences being at the discretion of an individual; the consequences should be laid out in the policy.

Mr. Rovero stated he is in favor of discretion because not every case is the same; an 18 year old student having a glass of wine at Thanksgiving dinner under the supervision of his/her parents should not be treated the same as a student that gets so intoxicated they have to have their stomach pumped.

J. Board of Education By Laws

Mr. Campolieta and Mrs. Hoehne reported.

Mr. Merola spoke about the number of people per committee and illegal meetings and the number of full Board meetings. He asked about all Board members getting the packets for the sub-committee meetings.

Mr. Nargi spoke about the elimination of standing committees and having two (2) full Board meetings a month.

Mrs. Cappabianca said she would like to see an Expulsion Committee added.

Mr. Cavagnero said he would like to discuss Mr. Nargi's idea further.

Mr. Thibault asked about the time of the Board meetings the future. He stated they should think about having a time cap for discussion items.

K. RFP – Technology Informational Services

Mr. Thibault presented.

Mr. Merola and Mrs. Cappabianca had questions about transportation liability of one of the companies interviewed by Mr. Thibault.

Mrs. Batchelder read aloud an email from the company pertaining to the transportation issue.

Mr. Kissko asked what the name of the companies are and if everything is up and running.

Mr. Cavagnero asked if the Board members could see the proposals. He asked about assessments and formal contracts.

Mr. Nargi asked how long the contracts were for. He also asked about the number of employees and costs.

Mr. Traub clarified some of the costs.

Mr. Rovero asked who they are using now.

L. Turf Committee Representative

Mr. Traub reported. He said Mrs. Cappabianca asked him to be the representative because of his construction background and he would be willing to be the Turf Committee Representative.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 8:53 p.m. Mr. Rovero made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss the proposed Administrators salary agreement and the State appointed mediation results. Mrs. Hoehne seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

At 9:10 p.m. the Board came out of Executive Session; the vote was not recorded.

ACTION ITEMS

A. Financial Statement

Mr. Rovero made a motion to approve the financial statement. Mrs. Cappabianca seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

B. Approval of Budget Transfers

Mr. Rovero made a motion to approve the budget transfers. Mrs. Cappabianca seconded the motion. The vote passed with one (1) opposed, Mr. Nargi.

C. Approval of Administrators Salary Agreement

Mrs. Cappabianca made a motion to approve the Administrators salary agreement. Mr. Kissko seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

D. Approval of Policy 6010; Bullying Prevention, Intervention and Safe School Climate with the Revision to Section ten (10) on page twelve (12)

Mrs. Hoehne made a motion to approve Policy 6010; Bullying Prevention, Intervention and Safe School Climate with the Revision to Section ten (10) on page twelve (12). Mr. Merola seconded the motion. The vote passed with one (1) opposed, Mr. Nargi.

E. Approval of Policy 6049; Chemical Health Policy for Student Athletes

Mrs. Hoehne made a motion to approve Policy 6049; Chemical Health Policy for Student Athletes. Mr. Merola seconded the motion. The vote passed with two (2) opposed, Mr. Nargi and Mr. Cavagnero.

F. Approval of the Board of Education By Laws

Mr. Rovero made a motion to approve the Board of Education By Laws as submitted with the addition of an Expulsion Sub Committee but not amending the number of Board members per subcommittee. Mrs. Cappabianca seconded the motion. The vote passed with two (2) opposed, Mr. Merola and Mr. Nargi.

Mr. Rovero spoke about attendance and punctuality at Sub Committee meetings.

Mrs. Cappabianca shared the same concerns as Mr. Rovero.

Mrs. Hoehne said she would rather see three (3) Board members and a Chairman per standing committee then two (2) Board members and a Chairman; she also said if a Board member is on a committee then it's their responsibility to attend that meeting.

Mr. Thibault also shared the same concerns as Mr. Rovero.

Mr. Merola stated his concerns about illegal meetings due to the number of committee members discussing official business.

G. Approval of Protected Harbor for Technology Services

Mr. Rovero made a motion to approve the RFP for Protected Harbor for Technology Services. Mr. Merola seconded the motion. The vote passed with one (1) abstention, Mr. Thibault.

H. Consent Agenda

Mr. Kissko made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda with the removal of items two (2): Approval of October 16, 2013 Special Board of Education Meeting Minutes and 5.a: School Improvement Committee: September 11, 2013 and October 30, 2013. Mr. Merola seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

1. Approval of October 23, 2013 Board of Education Meeting Minutes
2. Approval of October 16, 2013 Special Board of Education Meeting Minutes
3. Approval of November 5, 2013 Special Board of Education Meeting Minutes
4. Approval of November 5, 2013 Special Board of Education Meeting Minutes
5. Approval of Sub Committee Meeting Minutes
 - a. School Improvement Committee: September 11, 2013 and October 30, 2013 (minutes available but not approved by School Improvement Committee)
 - b. Policy Committee: October 9, 2013
 - c. Budget Committee: October 16, 2013
 - d. Personnel Committee: October 9, 2013
 - e. Grievance Committee: No Report
6. Appointments and Resignations
7. Notices for Homeschooling
 - a. D.P., grade 1, Eff. 2013-2014
 - b. D.P., grade 8, Eff. 2013-2014
 - c. S.P., grade 11/12, Eff. 2013-2014
 - d. C.S., grade 1, Eff. 2013-2014
 - e. J.S., grade 5, Eff. 2013-2014
 - f. B.S., grade 7, Eff. 2013-2014
 - g. R.R., grade 12, Eff. 2013-2014
8. Appointment of Mr. Ken Traub as the Turf Committee Representative

Mr. Kissko made a motion to approve Consent Agenda item number two (2): October 16, 2013 Special Board of Education Meeting Minutes as amended. Mr. Merola seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Mr. Kissko stated he would like Mr. Traub's response to his question of notification represented in the minutes. His response being he needed to inform certain people earlier than others to ascertain they could attend the meeting at that specific date and time.

Mr. Rovero made a motion to receive Consent Agenda item number 5.a: School Improvement Committee: September 11, 2013 and October 30, 2013 meeting minutes (minutes available but not approved by School Improvement Committee). Mrs. Cappabianca seconded the motion. The vote passed with one (1) opposed, Mr. Nargi.

Mr. Merola made a motion to approve the Appointment of Mr. Traub as the Turf Committee Representative. Mr. Rovero seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

COMMENTS FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

Mr. Kissko wished to thank Mrs. Peterson for her time spent as the Chairman of THS PTO and for all her help in providing information specifically concerning the academic nature of the curriculum. He also welcomed Mrs. Battle as the new Chairman of THS PTO.

Mr. Merola commented on all the good news in this meeting.

Mr. Rovero said he would like to thank and commend the Administration for being diligent with the website issues. He requested the release of the Budget calendar on the website.

Mrs. Cappabianca thanked Mr. Cavagnero and Mr. Merola for their service to the Board of Education.

Mr. Nargi asked about student's being expelled from an out of town school who are now residents of Torrington having a "clean slate." He read an article about a Torrington student that was expelled who is now participating in the football program of another school. He wanted to know if it's a State law that the student gets a "fresh slate." Mr. Nargi said he has been on the Board for six (6) years and was most impressed by Mr. Cavagnero's ability and desire to make all the Board members feel comfortable to express their opinions; he feels Mr. Cavagnero's leadership role as Chairman of the Board is still reflected today. He congratulated Mr. Cavagnero on being elected to the City Council.

Mr. Thibault expressed his thanks to Mr. Cavagnero and Mr. Merola.

Mr. Cavagnero said in ten (10) years there's been a high turnover of Board members; overall this Board is the most effective team he's worked with. The commitment to making this District better is evident in every meeting and discussion. This is a democratic process and everyone had different views and opinions. The best decisions come from a number of people making good decisions. He apologized to any Board members that may have been offended by his outspoken ways, but does not apologize for any of the positions he has taken or for the policies he has tried to adopt. He has always tried to work in the best interest of the kids. In the midst of all the data are 5,000 kids who look to ten (10) adults to protect their future. Mr. Cavagnero thanked everyone he has served with and made him a better Board member. He asked the Board

members to keep an open mind and a critical mind to everything happening in the world of public education. He said what he's come to learn is that it's all about wresting more local control. This is the fundamental battle, the core issue of producing a good education system. We need to trust what our Community wants.

Mr. Traub thanked Mr. Cavagnero for his ten (10) years of service. He thanked Mr. Merola for his two (2) years. He said they both have been very valuable.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Policy Committee: Mrs. Hoehne reported
2. Grievance Committee: Mrs. Cappabianca reported
3. School Improvement Committee: Mr. Cavagnero's position was discussed
4. Budget Committee: Mr. Rovero reported
5. Education Connection: Mr. Kissko reported
6. THS Oversight Panel: Mr. Kissko reported
7. Juvenile Court Update: No report
8. Turf Field Committee: Mr. Traub reported

ITEMS FOR UPCOMING AGENDA

- Financial Statement
- Committee Reports
- Law Suit: Updates
- CT State Statue 10-151

FUTURE MEETINGS

1. Policy Committee Meeting: December 4, 2013
2. Personnel Committee Meeting: December 4, 2013
3. Budget Committee Meeting: December 11, 2013
4. School Improvement Committee Meeting: December 11, 2013
5. Regular Board of Education Meeting: December 18, 2013

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:43 p.m. Mr. Merola made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Thibault seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.