

**TORRINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, September 18, 2013
Torrington High School Media Center
Major Besse Drive**

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:05pm.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL:

Present: Mr. Brady, Mrs. Cappabianca, Mr. Cavagnero, Mrs. Hoehne, Mr. Kissko, Mr. Merola, Mr. Nargi, Mr. Rovero, Mr. Thibault, Mr. Traub, Mrs. Batchelder, Mr. Campolieta, Mrs. Kloczko,

Absent: Mayor Bingham

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY SESSION

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

There were three (3) speakers.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Rovero made a motion to amend the agenda by eliminating the Executive Session and adding Discussion item "S" and approving the amended agenda. Mr. Merola seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

INFORMATION SHARING AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Superintendent Report

1. Opening Days of Schools

Mrs. Kloczko reported.

2. THS and TMS Handbooks

Mrs. Kloczko reported.

B. NEASC

Mrs. Kloczko reported.

C. District Annual Performance Reports and Determinations 2011-1012

Dr. Robin reported.

D. Superintendent Goals

Mrs. Kloczko reported.

Mr. Nargi asked what the Superintendent is doing to obtain money from the State to implement the changes outlined in her Goals. He asked for a financial report of the monies obtained from the State and Grants.

Mr. Cavagnero asked for clarification on one of the Goals.

Rubrics were discussed.

Mr. Merola asked about education for the Community on Common Core Standards.

Mr. Rovero asked what the Superintendent has in place to engage families. He also asked if any Community agencies or groups are participating in the Superintendent's Goal to engage families.

E. Teacher Evaluation Old vs. New

Mr. Campolieta presented.

Mr. Brady asked about student growth.

Mr., Kissko commented about direct teacher benefits to students and indirect administration benefits to students. He also said we don't only have to watch and communicate with out legislatures, but also with professional organizations.

Mr. Rovero had a question about paperwork associated with evaluations.

Documentation of observations was discussed.

Mr. Cavagnero spoke about attempts made to collaborate with other school administrations to communicate with the State on educational issues. He asked when this evaluation process was introduced, and who came up with the timetable.

Two administrative positions were discussed.

Mr. Thibault expressed concerns regarding the collection of data by the State and what it intends to do with that data.

Mr. Rovero asked if the State was providing any money for the Evaluation process.

Mr. Merola said he did see the benefits of this Evaluation process.

Mr. Kissko stated that actions can be interpreted in different ways, but he thinks the district is in good shape to implement this Evaluation process.

Mrs. Cappabianca said she believes the teacher evaluation process will hurt students in the short term by taking teaching time away from them, but will benefit students in the long term. She asked about the amount of time that will be spent on evaluations for the elementary and secondary schools. She also asked what the amount of time the teacher portion of the evaluation would be.

Mr. Nargi stated he believes this evaluation process is a step closer to the State taking over all the school districts. He asked how often this evaluation process will be repeated. He stated this process is nothing more than data collection on a group of people and he believes it is disturbing.

Mr. Cavagnero agreed with Mr. Nargi stating that in the private sector a high performing employee is evaluated in a fraction of the time this new teacher evaluation process will require. He asked if anyone from the Administration spoke to the State about more productive evaluation processes that require less time and money. He said this process is absurd and the money that has to be put towards it could be better spent for students and teachers.

F. Administration Organization for Torrington Public Schools

Mr. Thibault outlined the way the Administrators are organized within the schools.

Mr. Nargi asked about the number of Administrators in the High School. He also asked about the CIAT positions.

Mr. Cavagnero stated that the hierarchy of the Administration has to be clear to the Board.

G. Secondary Education Grade Level Contact Information

The Board reviewed the Contact Information.

H. Supervisor of Elementary Educational Services, School Safety, Wellness and Climate

The Board reviewed the position of Supervisor of Elementary Educational Services.

I. Supervisor of Elementary Educational Services, Support and Intervention Services

The Board reviewed the position of Supervisor of Elementary Educational Services.

J. Student Academic Achievement Results

Mrs. Kloczko reported to the Board.

K. Legislation Enacted CT General Assembly – 2013

Mrs. Kloczko reported to the Board.

Mr. Campolieta said he would be attending a legislative update meeting.

Mr. Merola asked about compliance with the hiring process.

L. School Governance Position Statement from CABA and CAPSS

Mrs. Kloczko reported to the Board.

M. Process for CT Superintendents Evaluations

Mr. Thibault outlined the evaluation process to the Board.

Mr. Cavagnero asked when Mrs. Kloczko officially became the Superintendent. He also asked when the last formal evaluation of a Superintendent was. He read aloud the Connecticut statute regarding evaluations.

Compliance with the State law regarding evaluation of the Superintendent was discussed.

N. Censure of Board of Education Member

Mr. Traub reported to the Board.

Mr. Cavagnero asked Mr. Traub the names of the Board members requesting this information.

Mr. Traub stated that he, Mrs. Cappabianca and Mrs. Hoehne, requested this information.

Mrs. Cappabianca stated her reasons for wanting a legal opinion on this subject.

Mr. Cavagnero asked if the Board members concerned about this situation have examples of meetings being disruptive.

Mrs. Cappabianca said she felt that it is inappropriate to discuss and in the future if a Board member has an issue with another member they have to bring it up right then and there, according to the legal ruling.

Mr. Cavagnero asked what the difference is between censuring a person over disagreement and “muzzling” a person over disagreement.

Mr. Traub stated a Board member has to display disruptive behavior.

O. Does the Board of Education want to seek Superintendent Position Annually (cost)?

Mr. Nargi spoke about the length of superintendent contracts and the process of hiring a superintendent.

Mr. Traub stated the rules of notifying a superintendent of termination.

Mr. Nargi expressed his displeasure at the State mandates regarding this issue.

Mr. Brady stated, in his opinion, people usually perform better if they have a longer contract.

The cost of doing a superintendent search was discussed.

Mr. Rovero spoke about evaluations.

Mr. Nargi outlined his thoughts on having an annual contract for the Superintendent.

Board of Education goals were discussed.

Mr. Nargi said the Board goals should be tied to the evaluation of the Superintendent.

P. Appointment of THS Turf Field Building Committee

Mr. Traub reported to the Board.

Mrs. Cappabianca said she would like to see more parent involvement, such as a PTO member be on the Committee.

Mr. Nargi asked about time parameters.

Mr. Cavagnero stated his thoughts on this issue. He asked why Torrington got an athletic grant and not a technological grant. He believes the Board is owed an explanation as to why it took so long for them to find out about this Grant. He stated the amount of the Grant is not enough for the field. He also said the Board of Education has the right to know who is going to be building the new field.

Mr. Traub outlined how the standing Turf Committee was formed and how the project obtained the Grant.

Mr. Cavagnero said they have to have some type of quality control.

Mr. Nargi said he would like to see the process of beginning the project expedited.

Mr. Merola said he would like to see the parent/PTO committee member be from the high school.

Q. Participate in CABE

The Superintendent asked the Board if they wanted to participate in CABE.

Mr. Nargi asked what has changed since the previous time they participated in CABE. He said he was not impressed with the organization and would not want to be involved.

Mr. Cavagnero agreed with Mr. Nargi and said the money could be spent better elsewhere.

Mr. Thibault asked how much it would cost, what the top three (3) benefits to the Board of Education are, and is there any appreciable benefit they can gain in one (1) year.

R. Budget Development Process and Timeline

Mr. Rovero reported to the Board.

Mr. Nargi said he would like a date specified, sometime in January, for the Superintendent to present the budget.

Mrs. Batchelder clarified that the March presentation is the final date for the Superintendent to present the budget.

Mr. Nargi stated there is not enough time between receiving the budget and voting on it.

Mr. Rovero stated this is a good starting point for this process and invited any Board member to attend the Budget Committee meetings to have a say in the process.

Mr. Nargi expressed his concerns regarding the budget process and the way the Superintendent spends the budget.

Mr. Cavagnero stated his thoughts on this issue. He said the Board has to be able to stand behind the budget once it's passed and the money should be allocated according to what they voted on.

Mr. Traub spoke about line item movement.

S. Discussion that the Board of Education retain an independent investigation concerning a complaint made against a Board of Education member

Mr. Nargi stated that he is opposed. The complainant should come before the Board and state their concerns. They should not spend the money for an investigator; the claimant should make their concerns on their own.

Mr. Traub explained the recommendation from the Board attorneys.

Mr. Nargi asked about notifying the insurance carrier. He stated that before they make this decision he would like some information from the insurance company.

Mr. Merola asked how this would have been different if they were in Executive Session.

Mr. Traub clarified the process.

Mr. Cavagnero asked if he could be told what the complaint is due to the fact that he is the complainant; he had to declare he wanted this discussion to occur in open session.

Mr. Traub said he hasn't seen the complaint. He explained that the complaint was filed and given to the attorneys. Then he read the recommendation from the attorneys on how to handle this situation.

Mr. Merola suggested they follow the attorneys' advice and make a motion. He asked if the attorneys had all the information regarding this complaint.

Mr. Kissko stated if it's not an insurance matter then it's not a financial matter. He expressed concerns over the intentions of the attorneys' office. He also said that at this point he has not heard an accusation so how can he decide on an investigation.

Mr. Rovero asked if there is a potential liability in an individual capacity or the Boards' capacity. He said if it's the entire Board, then how they can be impartial during a hearing.

Mr. Nargi expressed concerns to being a witness to the complaint and if he should be voting on this issue.

Mr. Traub stated that no Board member has to recuse themselves from this vote because they are not voting on the situation, they are voting on how to handle the investigation.

ACTION ITEMS

A. Financial Statement

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

B. Approval to Submit Building Committee to City Council

Mr. Rovero made a motion to approve the submission of a Building Committee to the City Council. Mrs. Hoehne seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

C. Approval to become Members of CABE

Mr. Brady made a motion to approve the membership of CABE. Another Board member seconded the motion. The vote passed with three (3) opposed, Mrs. Cappabianca, Mr. Cavagnero and Mr. Nargi.

D. Consent Agenda

1. Approval of August 21, 2013, Board of Education Meeting Minutes
2. Approval of August 20, 2013, Special Board of Education Meeting Minutes
3. Approval of August 20, 2013, Special Board of Education Meeting Minutes
4. Approval of Sub Committee Minutes
 - a. School Improvement Committee – No August meeting
 - b. Policy Committee – No Report
 - c. Budget Committee – August 20, 2013
 - d. Personnel Committee – No Report
5. Appointments and Resignations
6. Notices for Homeschooling
 - a. J.H., grade 8, Eff. 2013-2014
 - b. L.N., grade 3, Eff. 2013-2014
 - c. J.F., grade 6, Eff. 2013-2014
 - d. J.R., grade 7, Eff. 2013-2014

Mrs. Hoehne made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Rovero seconded the motion. The vote passed with one (1) opposed, Mr. Nargi.

Mr. Merola asked why there were no reports for the Policy and Personnel Committee Meetings.

Mr. Kissko asked if they keep a running count of the kids getting homeschooled.

E. MOVED, that the Board of Education retain an independent investigator for the purpose of conducting an investigation related to a complaint regarding a Board member, AND MOVED FURTHER, that the Board authorize the Board Chairperson, in coordination with the Board's legal counsel, Shipman & Goodwin, to facilitate the investigation.

Mr. Brady made a motion to approve the facilitation of an independent investigation into the complaint made against a Board member. Mr. Thibault seconded the motion. The vote passed with six (6) for and three (3) un-named Board members opposed.

Mr. Cavagnero asked for clarification on who will represent the Board and who will conduct the investigation.

Mr. Kissko asked what the next step would be based on the findings of the investigator. He expressed his concerns regarding this issue and his displeasure of this process.

Mr. Rovero asked why they are preserving impartiality.

Mr. Traub clarified the actions the Board can take against a Board member.

Mr. Nargi asked what the procedure would be to have the complainant come forth; he asked if they would they have to set up a hearing.

Mr. Traub explained that if the Board does not do an independent investigation, they will never hear the complaint because they will have to be the ones doing the investigation.

Mr. Rovero asked why they couldn't make a committee of some Board members to do the investigation and the rest of the Board members would remain impartial.

Liability and justice were discussed.

Mr. Nargi asked about the involvement of the Human Resource department.

Mr. Thibault made a motion to extend the meeting past 11:00 p.m. to 11:15 p.m. Mrs. Hoehne seconded the motion. The vote passed with two (2) un-named Board members opposed.

COMMENTS FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

Mr. Thibault informed the Board of the notification from Local 1579 of their intention to negotiate wages, hours, and other conditions of employment.

Mr. Nargi read Policy 1001, Professional staff hiring procedures; He asked during a previous meeting for a legal opinion concerning the Superintendent hiring staff without the Board's approval. He believes this Policy and State law have been violated.

He then read Policy 2008; Attorney policy. He asked the Board's attorney to issue a written memo to all Board members regarding any conversations with the Chairman and the Superintendent. He said it is his opinion this Policy states the same thing. He wants the attorney to advise if this is correct.

Mr. Nargi spoke about Policy 3030, Periodic Financial Reports; he asked why there was no financial report for the month of July, citing Policy 3033. Policy 4061, Professional Staff Recruiting; Mr. Nargi stated this Policy says the Superintendent only recommends an individual to fill a position. Policy 4070 states the Board of Education has the right to eliminate certified staff positions; not the Superintendent. He said according to these Policies the Board of Education should do all of the hiring.

Mr. Thibault asked for the cost of the legal opinion requested by Mr. Nargi.

Mr. Traub requested Mr. Nargi put his request for a legal opinion in writing.

Mrs. Cappabianca informed the Board that the Administrators Negotiation Committee has started. She also addressed the confusion of the Healthy Food Certification and Wellness Policy. She believed they were to receive some type of guidelines concerning this. Mrs. Cappabianca asked if the Healthy Food Certification is a Policy. She asked if the Board can make exemptions.

Mrs. Batchelder informed the Board that she is overseeing the Healthy Food Certification and is addressing all staff during their staff meetings. She offered to do a workshop for the Board.

Mr. Rovero commended the Administration on “getting ahead of things” in relation to Common Core Standards.

Mr. Kissko expressed his gratitude to the Superintendent.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Personnel Committee – Mr. Thibault reported.
2. Policy Committee – Mrs. Hoehne reported.
3. Grievance Committee – Mrs. Cappabianca reported.
4. School Improvement Committee – Mr. Cavagnero reported.
5. Budget Committee – Mr. Rovero reported.

Mr. Brady made a motion to extend the meeting past 11:15 p.m. to 11:20 p.m. Mr. Rovero seconded the motion. The vote passed with three (3) opposed, Mr. Kissko, Mr. Merola, and Mrs. Cappabianca.

6. Education Connection – Mr. Kissko reported.
7. THS Oversight Committee – Mr. Kissko reported.
8. Wellness Project – Mr. Merola reported.
9. Juvenile Court Update – No Report.

ITEMS FOR UPCOMING AGENDA

- Financial Statement
- Committee Reports
- TAG Restructuring – October
- Law Suit – Update
- CT State Statue 10-151
- Propane Contract
- Adult Education

FUTURE MEETINGS

1. Policy Committee Meeting – October 9, 2013
2. Personnel Committee Meeting – October 9, 2013
3. Budget Committee Meeting - October 16, 2013
4. School Improvement Committee Meeting – October 16, 2013
5. Regular Board of Education Meeting – October 23, 2013

ADJOURNMENT

At 11:20 p.m. Mr. Thibault made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Merola seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.