

**THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO BOARD APPROVAL AT THE NEXT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING  
CHESTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BOARD OF EDUCATION  
LIBRARY, CHESTER ELEMNTARY SCHOOL – 7:00PM  
SEPTEMBER 28, 2017**

The regular meeting of the Chester Board of Education was held on Thursday, September 28, 2017. In attendance were David Fitzgibbons, Arthur Henick, Tom Englert, John Stack, John Ropiak, Charlene Fearon and Rob Bibbiani. Also in attendance were Dr. Ruth Levy, Superintendent, Kristina Martineau, Assistant Superintendent, Tyson Stoddard, Principal, Kim Allen, Business Manager and Kelley Frazier, Clerk. Absent: Becky Iselin, Maria Scherber

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Fitzgibbons at 7:00 p.m. In his opening remarks, he stated that the focus of the district's strategic plan this year is to improve our students' critical thinking and creative problem solving skills.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Upon a motion made by Rob Bibbiani and seconded by John Stack, the Chester Board of Education **VOTED** unanimously to approve the minutes from the May 25, 2017 regular meeting and the Accounts Payable report.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

No Comment

**OTHER ITEMS:**

**Principal's Update**

Mr. Stoddard introduced the new staff at Chester Elementary. Mr. Stoddard took the Board on a walking tour of the security updates that have taken place over the summer.

**Update on 2017-18 School Year Opening**

Mr. Stoddard gave a brief update. The opening of the school year went smoothly. All staff had professional development days before the school started which focused on math instruction. There are currently 205 students. Curriculum night was well-attended. The PTO had their first meeting. A cultural arts program in October will focus on kindness and being grateful. School enrichment programs have begun. Grade levels are working with learning communities to focus on alignment. Mr. Stack requested that the goals of the strategic plan be posted around the building in kid friendly language.

**Possible VOTE to Accept \$200 Cash Donation from Melvin and Kristina Seifert**

Upon a motion made by Tom Englert and seconded by John Stack, the Chester Board of Education unanimously **VOTED** to accept the \$200 cash donation to be used to support Chester Elementary School educational and/or social development programs.

**REPORTS:**

**Financial Status Report – Ms. Allen**

Ms. Allen gave a brief update of the end of year reporting for 2016-17. The unaudited surplus estimate is over \$46,000. Ms. Allen discussed the expense accounts which had a variance.

Ms. Allen discussed the monthly reporting for 2017-18. Ms. Allen will remain vigilant of any unforeseen circumstances and will keep the Board informed of any developments as they arise.

**Cafeteria Report – Ms. Allen**

There may be a surplus in salaries due to turn over of staff. Additional reporting will be done to analyze the cafeteria financials.

**Committee Reports**

**Finance** – A preview of finance policies were reviewed and will be sent to the policy committee for review. The reserve will be replenished shortly. A review of the budget information was done.

**Curriculum** – K-12 content area groups were discussed as well as the math program and the next generation Science program.

**Policy** – A number of policies were updated. Discussions centered on the Shipman and Goodman policy regarding restraint. This will be discussed at the next Joint Board meeting.

**Committee Reports**

**Cafeteria**

The new Cafeteria Ad Hoc Committee had its initial meeting. Questions were developed for looking at cafeteria efficiencies. The committee will spend time in each cafeteria when the kids are there to discuss efficiencies. The State Department of Nutrition will speak to the group. Elementary and high school students will discuss with the group their thoughts and needs. Recommendations will be presented in March.

**OTHER COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Supervision District Committee Update**

The next meeting is in October.

## **LEARN**

The LEARN Teacher of the Year, Michael Rivera, was introduced at the September 14th meeting with special mention of his remarkable rapport with students. Ms. Fearon commented that students need this support to learn critical thinking skills and creative problem solving skills. The focus of the magnet school this year is to “deepen their work” regarding system development and the opportunities for providing additional resources and systems of improvement and collaboration throughout the LEARN schools and the region.

## **ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**

Ms. Martineau gave a brief update. Discussion was held about how curriculum is brought to the staff so that they are comfortable to begin using it. Support is always available and staff’s needs are evaluated by the administration. Professional Development occurred in August regarding the new math program, Bridges. The focus was on how to roll it out to staff. The teachers who piloted the program will now be grade level leaders to support the work. As teachers become more comfortable, the next step will be to discuss supporting the communication end with parents. K-12 content area groups will focus the instructional focus. This will help align the instruction. Grades K-6 and grades 7-12 will be broken into grade level bands. The three math coaches are working closely together. The next generation Science 6-12 Professional Development days focused on making sure things are aligned and planned out in scope and sequence. Teachers need to understand the conceptual transitions before resources are discussed.

## **SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**

### **District Update - Information and Communication Critical Thinking and Creative Problem Solving**

This agenda items will be on all agendas from this point forward.

The administrative changes have been very positive. It is the district goal to allow teachers opportunities to grow in our district. The Math Coach positions have allowed this to happen. Dr. Levy thanked the Board for allowing teachers to move into growth positions. Thirty students came from China for two weeks. It was a wonderful exchange. The Niche Report has named Region 4 number 20 in the state for schools. The new schedule for the high school has instituted extra time for lunch. It allows students to take more courses with additional flexibility. The Strategic Planning Process was developed further this summer.

### **Information and Communication**

#### **Discussion Regarding Any Pending Policies – Standing Item**

No discussion needed.

### **Pertinent Legislative Updates for 2017-18**

There are mandates which will have financial impact. Budgets have reduced Level I and II funding. Due to not having a finalized budget, it is a difficult time for our state and school. Reductions in funding to schools have been very difficult. Mr. Seidman and Dr. Levy are working on recommendations to improve cost efficiencies. These have been sent to CAFE for review. The enrollment projections in the district for next year suggest significantly less students in Deep River and Essex. Chester, however, is looking at some small growth in the school population. The budget process is looking at the needs for next year. We need to be as collaborative as we can be when initiating new programs. Changes are being suggested as to how decisions will be made for our towns and schools. One suggestion is to give the each town the

ability to make decisions on budgets and administrative positions at the schools. The ramifications for education are very concerning.

#### **Social and Emotional Wellness Committee**

This committee is focusing on the needs in our community. Areas of focus will be the opioid crisis, parenting in this day and age, resilience in students and families. This committee has been formed in conjunction with Tri-Town. Discussions dealing with the opioid crisis will take place on October 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>. In addition, the committee will address student absences, supporting families and students who need additional strategies to make sure students stay in school and feel comfortable.

#### **Marketing**

Some districts have purchased marketing services. Our district will try to do this on our own with in-house expertise. Valley students interested in public relations careers will be able to do their Capstone Project about the advantages of our school system.

Mr. Fitzgibbons thanked Mr. Ropiak and Mr. Henick for their years of service on the Board of Education as they are completing their terms.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No Comment.

#### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- Next Joint BOE meeting October 5, 2017
- Next CES BOE Meeting is Monday, November 20, 2017 @ 7:00pm
- Election of Board Officers (Nov. or after seating of new members)
- BOE and Community Input for 2018-19 Budget(on-going)
- Presentation of Major Budget Drivers for 2018-19(TBD)
- BOE Self-evaluation (TBD)

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

On motion duly made and seconded the Board unanimously **VOTED** to adjourn at 8:25p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelley Frazier, Secretary