

**Ashford Board of Education
Regular Meeting Minutes – September 4, 2014
7:30 p.m.**

Note: Per C.G.S. §10 – 218, Board of Education meeting minutes are provided in a draft format within 48 hours of the date the meeting was held. With the exception of motions and votes recorded, these minutes are unofficial until they have been read and approved by a majority vote of the Board. Should edits be necessary, they will be made at a regularly scheduled meeting, noted in the meeting minutes, and so voted upon.

Call To Order

Board chair J. Rupert called the meeting to order at 7:32 pm. Present were J. Rupert, K. Warren, J. Lippert, D. Wesson and K. Rourke. Also present were Superintendent J. Longo, Principal T. Hopkins, and recording secretary J. Barsaleau. Unable to attend was board member L. Donegan. There were several persons in attendance in the audience: G. Leedie, N. Page, S. Morytko and AEA member E. Turcotte (7:43 pm).

Persons to be Heard

Steve Morytko addressed the board and reviewed email correspondence he sent concerning the school website content, bus route pick up and drop off times, the school calendar, three year plans and board of education information. Mr. Morytko also asked if there were any plans to address the CMT results in the future.

J. Lippert thanked Mr. Morytko for his input and taking the time to bring the matter forward.

Communications

Chair J. Rupert acknowledged receipt of the email communication from Steve Morytko concerning the school website. Other communications received were an open house memo from Principal Hopkins, an editorial that appeared in the Chronicle about robotics and STEM focus at Ashford School, and an article about the introduction of SCERTS for students with autism spectrum disorder at Ashford School, also in the Chronicle.

In response to Mr. Morytko's question about CMT results, Mr. Hopkins responded that individual student results were being mailed home on 9/5/14. Dr. Longo noted that Ashford was one of only 10% of districts statewide whose students took the CMT tests last year. With this in mind, CMT preparation was limited, as many districts, including Ashford, opted to prepare staff and students for the new, Smarter Balanced Assessment testing that will begin this year.

Approval of Minutes: 08/21/2014

Motion to approve the minutes of 08/21/2014 made by J. Lippert, seconded by K. Warren. Grammatical corrections were acknowledged and will be made. Motion carried with two abstentions (D. Wesson and K. Rourke).

Committee Reports

No reports.

Administrative Reports

a. Superintendent

Dr. Longo has prepared a draft agenda for the 9/13/14 Board of Education retreat for review (copy attached). He reported that the opening of school went well. He has met with the bus coordinator and a new transportation manual will be created. The new website is under construction with Mrs. Ford taking the lead in working with its content development and he is hopeful that it will be up and active in October. Dr. Longo also will be addressing the board about the creation of a “webmaster” position.

Old Business

a. FY 14 Year-End Budget Status

The board received a copy of the 2013-2014 fiscal year end report (attached) and a carryover expense report (attached). K. Rourke asked for a year-end analysis of all over/under objects for the next meeting. D. Morgan and L. SanDiego will be in attendance at the next regular board meeting.

b. Board of Education Retreat

Dr. Longo had contacted EASTCONN concerning a facilitator for the retreat meeting, but they were unable to provide anyone. Dr. Longo will serve as the facilitator. Discussion followed concerning th

retreat agenda for the 13th. The retreat is a special meeting; therefore the agenda that is posted must be followed. The focus should be on educational goals and ideas for the direction of the education of all Ashford students. The notice will be shared with other town boards and posted on K12 Alerts, in the Chronicle, on the website and sent home with students.

c. Exterior Camera and Alarm Bid Status

Bids were due August 29th. The selectman's office only received one bid from Venture Security. Dr. Longo will review the bid with the first selectman and if the bid specifications are met, will recommend that the selectman award the bid.

New Business

a. Discussion Concerning Vacancy on the Board of Education

Counsel advises addressing the vacancy soon. The remainder of the term of the vacated seat is through November 3, 2015. The Board will post a notice of the vacancy and require that letters of interest/introduction from candidates be received prior to 5 pm on 9/18/14 and will schedule interviews and appoint a new member at its first October meeting. The board chair will contact the board of selectmen concerning the 30-day window for board action.

b. Election to Fill Vacancy on the Board of Education

Motion made by J. Lippert to table item 10b until the board's first October meeting. Motion seconded by D. Wesson and carried unanimously.

c. Staff Appointments

Dr. Longo recommended three staff appointments. Ryan Migaldi and Brian Freeman were recommended for appointment as part time custodians, and Scott Waddell to Information Technology coordinator. Ryan and Brian have both worked at Ashford School through placements by E.O. Smith's work-study program; have been on call substitutes and summer maintenance workers. Scott has worked many years along side Ashford's prior technology consultant, and has worked as a consultant here for the past two years. The board requested clarification of the proposed salary for the technology position versus what was budgeted for the technology consultant. The board will revisit this appointment pending receipt of that information for its next meeting.

Motion made by J. Lippert to appoint Brian Freeman and Ryan Migaldi to the positions of part time custodians. Motion seconded by K. Rourke and carried unanimously.

d. Webmaster

A webmaster position was discussed earlier and will be revisited at a future meeting. Dr. Longo will discuss the duties of a webmaster with Scott Waddell and will present the board with a draft job description for the proposed position.

e. Approval of Medical Standing Orders

Medical standing orders for 2014 as prepared by the school medical advisor, were reviewed prior to the meeting. J. Rupert noted that edits to the plan that had been asked for in the prior year was incorporated in this plan. The orders are not for publication and therefore will not be attached to the minutes.

Motion made by K. Warren to accept the medical standing orders as provided. Motion seconded by D. Wesson and carried unanimously.

Next Meeting Date/Agenda Items

The next regular meeting date is September 18th. Agenda items to include meeting new staff members, BOE vacancy, bus fleet status report, policy updates, homework policy regulation, website, FY 14 and 15 financial reports, exterior facility signage, staff appointment and BOE retreat report.

All Hazards Safety and Security Plan (Executive Session Anticipated, Action Anticipated)

Motion by K. Warren to enter into an executive session (9:26 pm) with Dr. Longo and Mr. Hopkins invited to attend for the purpose of discussing the All Hazards Safety and Security Plan. Motion seconded by J. Rupert and carried unanimously. Present in the session were Dr. Longo, J. Rupert, T. Hopkins, D. Wesson, J. Lippert, K. Rourke and K. Warren.

The board and invited attendees exited the executive session (10:06 pm)

Motion made by J. Rupert that the Ashford Board of Education accept the Ashford School Safety and All

Hazards Security Plan contingent upon the following amendments:

1. The plan include a schedule for the training of all staff
2. The evacuation plan be revised to change the evacuation from the front of the building to keep the fire lanes and the front of the building clear of all evacuates. The map must be revised to show the new evacuation routes
3. The room numbers be placed in all classroom windows
4. The plan include a procedure for testing the radios quarterly, and training of all staff in the appropriate use of the radios in an emergency situation.

Motion seconded by D. Wesson and carried unanimously.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting at (10:10 pm) made by J. Rupert, seconded by J. Lippert and carried unanimously.

Recorded by:



Jennifer Barsaleau
Recording Secretary

Approved by the Ashford Board of Education: 09/18/2014



**440 Westford Rd.
Ashford, CT 06278
www.ashfordct.org**

September 5, 2014

Dear Ashford School Families,

I hope that you and your children are adjusting well to the routines and exciting opportunities of a new school year. Our Open Houses are next week. Each evening will start with an optional presentation in the cafeteria at 6:00 p.m. by the administration about district and school goals. Classroom visits start at 6:30 p.m. and end by 7:30 p.m.

Please remember that our **Open House for grades 5-8 is on Wednesday, September 10th.** For grades 7-8, we ask families to follow their child's Monday schedule according to the following timing.

Period A: 6:42 - 6:50

Period B: 6:52 – 7:00

Period C: 7:02 – 7:10

Period D: 7:12 – 7:20

Period E: 7:22 – 7:30

James P. Longo, Ed.D
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Troy C. Hopkins
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Donna A. Hartigan, Director
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Please remember that our **Open House for grades 1-4 is on Thursday, September 11th.**

Please feel free to visit specials teachers throughout the evening.

When you are here, check out our new technology center consisting of a robotics lab (room 20a) and computer lab (room 20b)!

We look forward to seeing you at Open House.

Respectfully,

Troy C. Hopkins

Principal

Respect, Responsibility, Pride



Jennifer Barsaleau <jbarsaleau@ashfordct.org>

Current Ashford School Web Site

2 messages

Steve Morytko <smorytko@yahoo.com>

Wed, Aug 27, 2014 at 9:56 AM

Reply-To: Steve Morytko <smorytko@yahoo.com>

To: James Longo <jplongo@ashfordct.org>, Troy Hopkins <thopkins@ashfordct.org>

Cc: Jen Barsaleau <jbarsaleau@ashfordct.org>, Jim Rupert-BOE <jim.rupert@boltonct.org>

Dr. Longo,

I quickly reviewed the school website and noticed a few problems. Some of these issues should have been reviewed/fixed *prior* to the start of the school year as parents use them for planning purposes. I recall bringing some of these same issues to your attention in prior years too. I would suggest that school documents on the website be reviewed on a regular basis for timeliness and accuracy. I saw the announcement suggesting a new website is being planned but we need accurate information on the current one.

1) Bus Routes: On the AS front page the link to the bus routes says 2013-2014 (should be 2014-2015). Yes, it takes you to 2014-2015 but ...

Routes detail: The document says "Elementary AM and PM" but there are no PM references. In light of your policy of returning students to the office it seems more than reasonable to provide PM estimates for parents need to plan to be at the bus stops for dropoff.

Pre-school routes: There are no pickup times listed as in the elementary routes.

2) Ashford School Calendar: I noticed that final approval was done May 15 but I believe the calendar wasn't posted until approximately mid-August. I believe that means we didn't know the first day of school until then too (without calling the school). It would be helpful to parents/students if the calendar was posted as soon as it's

available to make it possible to account for school activities when planning after-school care, trips, vacations and the like.

3) School Handbook and School Compact: I see a 2013/14 handbook link but nothing for 2014/15.

4) BOE Agendas and Minutes: neither the July or August agendas or minutes are posted in the BOE links. I believe that FOI guidelines state they should be posted soon after a meeting. This is a recurring problem and I find myself bringing this to AS's attention often.

5) I might also suggest that Dr. Longo's Ashford Citizen articles replace the last entry (from 2012) in the Superintendent's Corner of the current website.

6) As I mentioned last year in a document addressing suggested improvements for the website, the school mailing list (used for weekly announcements and emergency notifications) is wholly dependent upon parents registering on the K12-Alerts system. That is not clearly defined on your website or in send-home correspondence to parents. As a result it's quite likely a significant number of parents do not receive anything (such as weekly announcements) sent out using the emailing list generated by K12-Alerts. I would strongly urge you to address this issue and clearly state in a section on your front page (new or old website) that the only way for parents to get these informative announcements is to register with K12-Alerts.

The school is planning to replace the current website but many of the issues above have to do with actually reviewing and maintaining the content of the website. While I look forward to seeing the new website, the current one would likely be more than adequate if only it was maintained better.

Please include this email as public correspondence for the next BOE meeting.

Best regards,

Steve Morytko

Editorial

We offer these threads, needles

Threads to Ashford School, which serves children in K-8 in the tiny town, for taking the big venture of creating its very own robotics lab, which was officially dedicated late last month. Utilizing computers and gadgets, children now have the ability to build robots of various kinds. While their projects will be amazing — school started last Thursday in Ashford — what's even more notable is the fact such a small school in a small town went in this direction. The whole STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) component is a major trend in education these days, fueling expansion at the University of Connecticut and being the subject of a state-of-the-art regional magnet school in Windham. Now, it also is a key component of Ashford School, the town's lone educational facility.

Knots to the Town of Windham for reforming its ethics board, which hasn't met since 2012 due to a lack of viable candidates. The ethics board generally deals with the more controversial issues in town, namely conflicts of interest regarding town officials and other alleged improprieties, which makes it a vital board. That Windham went without such a board so long is unfortunate. All towns need to have an active system to process ethics complaints. It's good government. Without an active board for that long, Windham has been vulnerable. Hopefully, the newly revised board will get the candidates it needs. Those interested should contact the town manager's office in Windham Town Hall.

Needles to the summer crime wave that appears to have struck Willimantic businesses. The occasional gas station robbery is not uncommon, but the number of such robberies in the Thread City this summer is distressing. Starting in late June with a hold-up at the Jeens store and continuing with two robberies at a Valero station, one at a Family Dollar store and another at Shan's Mart in town, police are busy. Those cases, combined with the robbery and assault — in broad daylight — at a Willimantic package store parking lot makes it look like the Thread City is becoming a crime zone. It has to stop. These are still difficult economic times in this region and that, historically, can breed crime. Some of these cases likely are connected and, hopefully, police will get their suspects.

Threads to the Coventry Town Council's steering committee for agreeing to look into a Berlin activist's pitch for an ordinance that restricts adult-oriented businesses in a town. In 1997, the man — Scott Shemeth — noticed a strip club located next to a McDonald's and a medical building in his hometown. That launched a crusade that, eventually, resulted in Berlin adopting tough regulations in 2000 restricting where adult-oriented establishments can be located. Now, 14 years and several successful court challenges later, Shemeth has sent copies of Berlin's regulations to all Connecticut towns. Coventry is taking a look at them and the subcommittee will revisit the issue early next year, giving the town time to have its attorney look at the ordinance and to gather input from towns with such ordinances. Most likely, this will require some zoning regulation tweaks in Coventry, as a town cannot ban an appropriately zoned business simply because it doesn't like it. The fact Coventry is looking at this now, with no plans apparent, is a proactive step to control such facilities.

Threads to the Mansfield Town Council for unanimously voting Aug. 25 to ban smoking at all town parks. This was a no-brainer given the litter and health issues associated with the bad habit. Now, families utilizing the parks needn't worry about second-hand smoke, its associated ills and smells, and the aesthetic limitations associated with butts piling up on park grounds. While there are no plans for strict enforcement, the hope is folks will police themselves when it comes to this. Thanks to the council, nonsmokers have some legal backing from the town.

Ashford School's new program offers help to autistic students

By AKAYA MCELVEEN

Chronicle Staff Writer

ASHFORD — Ashford School will introduce a Social Communication Emotional Regulation Transactional Support (SCERTS) program this school year.

Using an integrated approach, SCERTS works with children with autistic spectrum disorder, which is a group of developmental disabilities that can cause significant social, communication and behavioral challenges.

In the past, Ashford School has used the Applied Behavior Analysis program, but Donna Hartigan, director of pupil personnel services, said the school will shift its efforts to adapt to the SCERTS method.

SCERTS is a family-centered program that recognizes individual differences in children.

It provides specific guidelines for helping a child become a competent and confident social communicator, while preventing problem behaviors that interfere with learning and the development of relationships, according to information provided to the board of education.

The program was created by a multidisciplinary team led by Barry Prizant approximately two decades ago, according to the SCERTS web site.

SCERTS professionals from different disciplines will collaborate with each other as well as with the families of the students, to address core challenges and address adaptive skill deficits, Hartigan said.

A part of the program includes having a core group of staff members trained and going into the homes of the students to teach the parents how to work with this new program.

Ashford School's SCERTS team is comprised of Amy Vasington, Katie Knecht, Ginger Lusa, Jadey Longo, Hilary Lemos, Danielle Romano, Lori Goodale and Jane Evans.

Collectively, the team reviewed the training DVD, discussed elements of the program and analyzed the benefits the students will receive from the program.

In a board of education meeting on Aug. 21, Hartigan recalls a success story from the switch to the new program.

Hartigan said the school, which had been using the ABA program with a boy who was unable to speak, shifted to SCERTS and witnessed "phenomenal" results.

"We have a little boy we were working with and we started working with the old program. We shifted to SCERTS, he was a little boy who was to the point where he couldn't even say two words," said Hartigan.

"This summer we really worked hard on this SCERTS program, and he now speaks full sentences. It's phenomenal."

Hartigan said with the training the teachers were provided with, the team is ready to start the new school year.

More information on the program can be found at www.scerts.com, or by contacting Hartigan at (860) 429-6419.

Actual & Budgeted Expenses & Encumbrance

Account Number	Account Description	Current Year Budgeted	Adjustment	Net Working Budget	Period Expenditure	Current Year Expenditure	Encumbrances	Balance Remaining
General Fund (01)								
Audit Adjustments								
01-2200-700-99999	Miscellaneous	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00
01-2700-700-00000	Operating Transfers Out/Cafe	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
01-2700-700-00001	XFR to 7% Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
01-2700-700-00005	Audit Adjustments	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTAL Audit Adjustments		2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00
01-2200-910-00000	Supplement Appropriation	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
General Fund (01) Totals	7,035,706.00	0.00	7,035,706.00	7,003,645.64	7,003,645.64	0.00	32,060.36	
Totals Consolidated Funds	7,035,706.00	0.00	7,035,706.00	7,003,645.64	7,003,645.64	0.00	32,060.36	