

Ashford Board of Education
Special Meeting Minutes
Annual Retreat – August 20, 2015
5:30 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 special meeting to order at 5:37 PM. Present were J. Rupert, K. Rourke, J. Mozeiko, J. Lippert, L. Donegan (5:44 pm), K. Warren (6:00 pm) and D. Wesson (6:30 pm). Also present were Dr. J. Longo, Superintendent, Principal T. Hopkins, Pupil Personnel Director C. Ford, Asst. Principal G. Dukette and recording secretary J. Barsaleau. Present in the audience were S. Morytko, S. Irvine, R. Haeger and D. Atkinson.

Additional materials were distributed (attached)

Public Input

Dr. Longo began the annual retreat by welcoming everyone in attendance. He continued by outlining the agenda for this meeting, the first hour dedicated to goals; the second hour to long term planning, followed by a short recess prior to the start of the regular meeting.

Dr. Longo asked for public comment:

Rebecca Haeger wondered how art was going to be implemented more? She felt the school was lacking in this area, there should be more displays of student art throughout the school.

Steve Morytko would like to see more detailed technology plan information. He reported that he has heard others complain about the budget process being rushed and short on detail at presentation time; new things that are known should be shared in advance. He stated the budget document is much improved and efficient over prior years. He has also heard residents question additions in administrative staffing - they feel there are too many administrative positions and that consolidation of services with other districts and the town should be considered wherever possible. Website communication has improved, but still needs more attention. K12 is currently the most effective means of communication; he suggested creation of a group email list to families as a means of notification.

J. Rupert stressed that attendance by members of the public sharing concerns such as these can affect positive change. Mr. Morytko has done this and provided suggestions concerning the website for example, and some of those suggestions have been implemented.

J. Mozeiko shared some questions from parents who have contacted her. They seek more communication from teachers to parents with the new trimester schedule; there was some concern that the SBAC testing falls during the spring time change and a question was posed concerning growth and development unit taught in 5th grade – do the students switch classes and learn about the opposite sex?

Mr. Hopkins responded that the testing window for SBAC is rather lengthy and the time change will be considered, and the 5th grade groups do not switch classes during the growth and development unit.

Dr. Longo encouraged those present in the audience to share with others the importance of contacting a member of the administration with any questions or concerns, as it is best to address them before they become too great.

Susan Irvine asked if there was some way to share with the community that people should contact the school administration with any questions or concerns?

L. Donegan suggested creating a “Q&A” sheet, writing about the retreat in the Ashford Citizen or other publication. Other ideas discussed were an electronic or moderated forum, a questionnaire or suggestion box at the Open Houses.

In response to overall public comment, J. Rupert noted that the Board of Education begins its annual budget process in November. Dr. Longo added that he held two public evening meetings in early October of last year for public dialogue concerning specific budget topics, including staffing and curriculum.

Mission and Goals

- **Superintendent's Goals Reports**
- **Administration's Goals Report (T. Hopkins)**

Administrative team members discussed their individual goals (attached). Each member of the administrative team elaborated upon the written goals and responded to audience and board member questions relating to the listed goals.

Dr. Longo concluded with a brief discussion of his written goals. Dr. Longo noted that he met recently with Supt. Harding from Willington to discuss ideas for collaboration between our districts. Dr. Longo attended the "Back to School" meeting for CT Superintendents earlier this week and was approached by fellow superintendents who said they have been hearing great things about Ashford School.

J. Rupert reported that he had a conversation with the Willington superintendent and he stated that he was very impressed with Ashford School, and he too, spoke of possible collaboration with Ashford.

Dr. Longo stated this is confirmation that the Administration and the Board of Education are responsive and as a result, Ashford School has improved greatly over the past six or seven years.

Further dialogue amongst the members and the audience followed concerning the goals presented and how best to communicate them to families and the community.

- **Board of Education Goals – Discussion – Action Plans**

Board members stated their thoughts for discussion in goal setting.

K. Rourke would like to see all parent forms available online to avoid repetitive filing of forms. She also cited inconsistency amongst teachers within the same grade in terms of how much homework is given.

L. Donegan spoke of goals in sustainability, conversation, recycling, environmental and global education; extracurricular and socio cultural goals, diversity and more current events.

J. Rupert feels that what we are doing is phenomenal, unique and is being done well. People are taking notice, and as time marches forward, we may be in a position to reach out and share our creation with other schools in terms of taking in students from other towns or an exchange of students.

J. Lippert would like to see a study of such an exchange of students without increasing staffing.

J. Mozeiko would like to have a policy concerning video/movie time in the classroom; IEP's for gifted students with goals that are set much like students with disabilities. Mrs. Ford responded that gifted students do have identified goals they have chosen for themselves in individualized instruction.

D. Wesson would like to see expansion of "Respect, Responsibility, Pride" for students to support each other resulting in less bullying. Mr. Hopkins responded that another program "Second Step" is being researched to address that.

K. Warren would like the budget done on time.

J. Lippert spoke of consistency with the budget, sharing of resources, streamlining and capitalizing where possible.

D. Wesson mentioned teacher exchange.

It was the general consensus of the Board and Dr. Longo to table the Long Range Planning portion of the agenda. The item will be addressed at a future meeting.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting at (7:38 pm) made by L. Donegan seconded by J. Mozeiko and carried unanimously.

Recorded by:

Jennifer Barsaleau
Recording Secretary

Approved by the Ashford Board of Education:

Unapproved