

OLD SAYBROOK BOARD OF EDUCATION
50 Sheffield Street
Old Saybrook CT 06475
(860) 395-3157

The Old Saybrook Board of Education met in Regular Session on Tuesday, October 24, 2017, at the Old Saybrook Board of Education Office, Old Saybrook, CT 06475.

Board Members

Eileen Baker
Karen Brodeur
Philip Broadhurst
Kelley Kennedy
James Henderson
George Chang
Alan Hyla
Holly King
Joanne Sullivan

Others

Jan Perruccio, Superintendent of Schools
Anne Littlefield, Shipman and Goodwin Attorney

I. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Kennedy called the meeting to order at 5:40PM.

II. COMMUNITY COMMUNICATIONS

Audience of Citizens

Prospective Board Members, Jan Furman and Tara Barros, introduced themselves.

Correspondence

There was no correspondence addressed to the Board.

III. MEETING MINUTES

Baker/Brodeur

“Move to approve the October 10, 2017, Regular Meeting Minutes as presented”

MOTION: CARRIED (8-0-1)

Board Member Hyla abstained.

IV. EDUCATIONAL ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

Board of Education Officer Nomination/Election Process

When the Board is coming up on an election, the Board discusses possible nominations for Board officer positions. All officers are elected on an annual basis after the elections. There is a known vacancy in the Vice Chair position.

Process: The Board may hear nominations for officer positions, a paper ballot is given to each Board Member to cast their vote, the paper ballots are collected, counted, and recorded. Superintendent Perruccio noted that in the recent past, the Board has had a ballot with all Board Member names listed on the ballot (in case anyone on the Board is interested in serving as an officer). The Board discussed whether any individual member is interested in a particular officer position. Each officer briefly described the duties of the various officer positions.

Board of Education Liaison Assignments and Purpose

This item was discussed at the last Board evaluation process meeting. Liaisons are currently getting many communications about committees (ex. Curriculum committee, etc.). Liaisons are receiving minutes and records from these meetings. Chairman Kennedy questioned the Board about whether the role is effective as it is currently envisioned. Board members noted that the committee meetings are often during the day, making it difficult or impossible for Board members to attend. The liaison role is one for committees as well as individual schools. There are in district liaisons (e.g. Curriculum) and out of district liaisons (e.g. CABE). Some Board members who act as liaisons noted that, although records of the committee are received, sometimes the documents are difficult to absorb after the fact. Perhaps a point person for each committee could be appointed to coordinate/assist the Board member liaison. The district ILT could assist with this task, along with Amity Goss, including focusing the Board on the ways in which the Board can assist, for example, from a resource perspective. A structure of periodic check-ins (beginning of the year, midyear, end of year) would be a helpful way of structuring the liaison/committee relationship. This structure could streamline the communication with the Board. Superintendent Perruccio will ask for feedback/ideas from the ILT and DLT and Director Goss about the best manner in which to proceed with respect to this issue.

Board of Education Member Handbook

Secretary Brodeur and Board Member Chang reported on the Board of Education Member Handbook. The Board members discussed the different sections of the draft Board Member Handbook. The Board held a brief discussion of the meeting norms section of the handbook, making suggestions for the revision of this section. The Board also discussed the sections pertaining to the officer roles and responsibilities and code of ethics. The Board also discussed a possible addition to the Handbook to discuss Board members' service on various support organizations (such as the PTO), as well as service as a Board member while one is also a parent in the district. The Handbook is almost done and (after minor edits) will soon be ready for Board approval.

Board and Committee Meetings – Subcommittee Chairman Roles and Responsibilities

Secretary Brodeur asked each chair of each committee to write a brief description of the responsibilities and activities of the standing committees, including typical

timelines or processes used within the committee. Superintendent Perruccio offered to review each of the summaries for accuracy and thoroughness. Chairman Kennedy will also prepare a brief summary of the work of the Chair.

Communication and Public Relations – General Update

Superintendent Perruccio led the discussion about the district's communication initiatives. She referenced the district's Twitter feed ("rah rahs!") and Student Work Weekly as mechanisms created to celebrate student work. The Public Relations committee has worked hard to address feedback that the district did not communicate enough with stakeholders prior to the beginning of Superintendent Perruccio's tenure. The district developed and launched a variety of robust communication strategies, with the result the communication may be "too much" in that the various communication vehicles are flooding parents and others with too much information. In order to ensure that the district's strategic vision is appropriately shared with all stakeholders, Superintendent Perruccio and the Public Relations Committee are re-visioning the district's communication strategies to ensure that stakeholders can access the information they need, when they need it, and get the specific details that they need. For example, all district communication is now archived so that stakeholders can access all historical, as well as current information. Of particular focus is ensuring that the district's strategic plan is digestible on all levels, by all groups (students, staff members, families).

Superintendent Perruccio noted data privacy concerns and the district's efforts to ensure that all communication methods used by the district are compliant with the data privacy requirements that will be in effect on July 1, 2018. The Board then discussed different ways in which the strategic plan can be personalized and individualized (e.g. made relevant) to students, families, etc. The issue with communication is about different learning styles and reaching each person in a manner that they can relate to. One question for the Public Relations Committee (and the Board) is how we measure the effectiveness of our communication efforts. One measure would be when students and teachers can articulate for each other how their work relates to the strategic plan (or the elements of the plan, whether specific reference to the plan is made or not). The Board then discussed different means by which students can be encouraged/incentivized for work on these initiatives. A suggestion was also made that committee meetings start with or at least include reference to the strategic plan and the initiatives of the district.

Board Member Meeting Preparedness, Alerting to Availability, Communication Pathways, and Telecommunication Process/Procedures

The Board was reminded that the expectation is for all Board members to read materials in advance so as to maximize meeting participation and efficiency. If Board members will not be able to participate, each Board member is expected to communicate with the Superintendent's assistant so as to assure a quorum will be present for each meeting. The (draft) Board Member Handbook includes information about communication pathways for specific issues, and Board members are reminded

to follow these procedures. Board policy permits Board members who cannot participate in person in a meeting to participate electronically (through Webex or other means) and anyone with questions about how to use those vehicles may speak with the Superintendent's assistant.

Amount of Communication and Type of Communication – Liaison Assignments

The Board reviewed this issue under a previous agenda item.

Amount of Communication and Type of Communication – District Level Committee Minutes

Each Board member receives the records of multiple committees, and there is a concern about information overload. Board members acknowledged that there is so much information that comes to their attention, it is not possible to actually read and absorb all of the information provided. That said, each Board member expressed that getting all of the information is great, in that each Board member can choose to focus on things that are of interest to the Board member.

A concern was raised that the receipt of too much information could lead to the Board members missing out on the key information, but the Board as a whole, felt that getting the information is important to Board members to fulfil their mission as a participating member of the Board and members will access that information that they need or are interested in.

With respect to communications about strategic plan updates, the Board discussed the format of the strategic plan updates. Individual Board members expressed satisfaction with the format while noting that the Board Chair can move the Board along and makes sure that the Board does not get mired down in the details. Ms. Perruccio can assist in that by ensuring that the presentation of the strategic plan updates include key accomplishments, as well as challenges and resource needs, impediments (roadblocks) and key next steps. Superintendent Perruccio noted that she will utilize the template for Board presentations as a way to facilitate a focused and relevant discussion of strategic plan updates.

The Board recessed at 8:35PM.

The Board resumed at 8:50PM.

Board of Education/Superintendent's Goals Review and Strategic Plan Progress Reporting

Superintendent Perruccio reported on the progress on her goals and the strategic plan.

Budget Development Process

Superintendent Perruccio reviewed the timeline for the budget process and invited comment from Board members regarding the budget process (including the specific

written budgets documents). The Board discussed how to best muster support for the Board's budget in these difficult and challenging times. The Board also discussed different groups they should consider reaching out to in addition to the Chamber of Commerce, the Rotary Club, PTO/PTA etc. In terms of process, the Board evaluated how information could be presented to the public regarding the public the impact of specific governmental aid cuts (such as funding for special education) to make the impact accessible to all members of the public (without the need to pore through reams of budget documents). Press coverage has been strong on the state's budget crisis, making it likely that the average taxpayer is aware that the state's economic crisis will specifically impact the school district. It is difficult to maintain the values of transparency and sincerity when the final budget numbers are not known. The Superintendent asked for feedback from Board members about changes to the budget document. Board members and prospective Board members complimented the Superintendent on the district's prior year budget presentation.

Enrollment Planning and Vision

Board Member Chang led the discussion on the topic of declining enrollment, sharing statistical information about enrollment trends. The data shows that younger individuals are moving away from Old Saybrook. The likelihood is that the Old Saybrook High School population will decline to fewer than 400 students. These trends will require the Board to be creative to continue to offer the same breadth of course offerings as well as rigor in the offerings.

During the discussion, individual Board members and the Superintendent discussed the possible impacts of declining enrollment and how to respond proactively instead of reactively. The Board discussed the creation of an ad hoc committee to study the issue to learn more about the issue.

CABE Board Member Training

Chairman Kennedy and Superintendent Perruccio led the discussion concerning CABE training opportunities, including Board member academy trainings, the CABE Convention and also a presentation that CABE will be facilitating in January. Part of the CABE membership includes a retreat offered by CABE, and Board members expressed a desire to take advantage of CABE's retreat services. Chairman Kennedy will follow up.

Convocation Staff Feedback

The Superintendent shared feedback from the staff concerning Convocation. In general, people liked the shorter format, quick messages and later start time.

V. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Brodeur/Baker

“Move to enter into Executive Session at 9:35PM for the purpose of evaluating the Superintendent of Schools and Board of Education Members”

MOTION: CARRIED (9-0-0)

The Board invited Superintendent Perruccio and Attorney Littlefield into Executive Session.

VI. RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

The Board returned to open session at 10:30PM.

VII. COMMUNITY COMMUNICATIONS

Audience of Citizens

No citizens addressed the Board of Education.

VIII. REMINDERS

- OSHS – 8th Grade Open House – October 26 – 6:00-8:00PM
- OSHS - Blood Drive – October 27 – 6:00AM
- Goodwin – Costume Parade – October 31 – 2:15-2:45PM
- Goodwin – Food Drive – November 3
- OSHS – Ram Booster Meeting – November 6 – 7:00PM
- OSHS – Parent Action Council – November 8 – 6:00PM
- OSHS – PTO Meeting – November 8 – 7:00PM
- Goodwin – PTA Meeting – November 9 – 7:00PM
- OSHS – Fall Play – November 9 - 11 – 7:30PM
- Grade 5 – Chorus Veterans’ Day Program
- Board of Education Meeting – November 14 – 7:30 p.m.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Henderson/Hyla

“Move to adjourn at 10:30PM”

MOTION: CARRIED (9-0-0)

Karen Brodeur, Secretary
Old Saybrook Board of Education

Minutes recorded and typed by:
Trent Gerbers, Executive Assistant
*DRAFT - Subject to approval at the next BOE meeting