

MEETING: Oxbow Unified Union School District Board

DATE: Wednesday, March 11, 2020

TIME: 5:00 PM

PLACE: NES library

Board members: Danielle Corti, Angela Colbeth, Melissa Gordon, Timm Judas

Administrators: Bruce Williams, Kate Paxton, Morgan Moore, Jean Wheeler, Lori Blood

Public: Amy Hayward, Edith Fogarty, Alex Nuti-de Biasi, *Journal Opinion*, Shannon Young, Brandi Young, Felicia Kingsbury, Jamie Rogers, Ashley Colbeth, Amanda Hill, Liz Drugach, Laura Marsh, Lisa Williams, Heidi Allen, Cathy Roberts, Nancy Emley, Robin Amber, Jessica Loeffler, James Prosoco, Ted Pogacar

CALL TO ORDER

Welcome

- D. Corti called the meeting to order at 5:05 PM.

Board Business

- Agenda Review

Delay H11 discussion for a future meeting, move budget up the agenda to the 5:20 slot.

D. Corti explained that the Public Comment section of the meeting is open to anyone in the community. Non-community members will need to ask to be recognized before making a comment. The Board will likely not comment back, but will listen, and may respond to questions. D. Corti noted that names and identities are not permitted, with exception of identifying yourself before making your comment.

- Approve Minutes of the 2/5/2020, 2/19/2020, and 2/27/2020 meetings.

The 2/5/2020 minutes will remain in draft form because there was not a quorum at that meeting. M. Gordon made a MOTION to approve the minutes of 2/19/2020. T. Judas seconded. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR. M. Gordon made a MOTION to approve the minutes of 2/27/2020. T. Judas seconded. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

- The Board and Administration introduced themselves to the audience.
- No contracts
- Correspondence

Receipt of New England Association of Schools and Colleges accreditation for OHS. This is a 2-year special report. The usual 5-year report was submitted to NEASC in February.

- No Other

Public Comment, 5:20

Ashley Colbeth said there's considerable anxiety among the NES community of students and parents because incidents of physical violence at the school have not been addressed despite meetings/communication with NES teachers, principal, guidance, and superintendent. There is a high level of concern that the school is presently not safe, and without action by the NES staff, there will be further assaults. A. Colbeth is waiting for the plans discussed in a meeting with Cate Beaton to be implemented, and she requested that students are supervised more closely.

Jamie Rogers said her child's academic learning is affected by the behavior issues in the school because of regular disruptions caused by extreme misbehavior. Her child cannot focus on classwork and she does not feel her child is emotionally or physically safe in the school.

Brandi Young's child is not getting the academic assistance she requires, was blamed for her inability to function in the classroom, and she was advised to seek counseling. E. Knisley has not responded to Brandi's attempts to communicate with her.

Liz Drugach's child said teachers did not intervene when rocks were thrown at him and hit him, and he feels he cannot rely on the NES staff to address these violent incidents.

James Prosoco noted an absence of supervision, and an adult presence, in front of the school at the morning drop off and a lack of para educators in the classrooms. He detailed the mishandling of a serious ski day injury and an extreme lack of communication from the school regarding this incident and other issues.

Kathy Roberts voiced concern about BES's social worker position for the 2020-2021 academic year, stating a need for this position as full time at BES, and not shared between schools. The position is a point person in the community that manages crisis assessment in a timely manner, communicates with DCF, and they address social issues in the school, including opioid-related issues and gender identification.

M. Moore asked NES parents to make appointments to meet with her. She wants to make plans to address behavior issues; in-person meetings will be helpful.

Laura Marsh stated that removing all the children from the classroom when a student misbehaves is not an effective teaching method; it disrupts the children who are working. 'Clear the halls' is equally ineffective, and in fact, enables the misbehaving students.

D. Corti wants to schedule a community meeting with teachers, principal, superintendent, and the behavior interventionist in the next 2-3 weeks to address these concerns.

E. Fogarty said that presently the primary concern is that the classroom is safe.

K. Paxton thanked K. Roberts for her letter and for bringing her concerns to the attention of the Board. She will follow up on the concerns raised in the letter and appreciates the staff advocating for the students.

Liz Drugach asked if there is a policy on how to deal with a disruptive child in the classroom. B. Williams replied there is not a district-wide policy. These issues are addressed case by case, and the procedure is to proceed with what is least disruptive to the class.

There was a request for data on the number of poor behavior incidents in the past, including the 'clear the halls' and 'close your door' stats.

Budget, 5:50

The Board received the Budget to Actual financial statements for each entity, BES, NES, and OHS, including a summary page that highlighted key points.

Covered in the assessment: central administration, special education, transportation.

BES

The town treasurer was still collecting delinquent town taxes prior to Jan 30.
\$126, 895 remains in budget after the next OESU assessment.

NES

The small school grant of \$17,000 was received.

OHS

Tuition revenue for the first semester is in.
\$277,000 remains in budget after the next OESU assessment.

- Food service revenues are behind by a month --- this is standard.
- On revenue side, special education goes into the combined cost center for BES, NES, and OHS.
- T. Judas asked if there are encumbered expenses, or anticipated encumbered expenses, considering the funds remaining in the budget.
 - J. Wheeler said money is earmarked, but not encumbered, for technology expenses.
 - L. Blood said remaining funds are often used to cover unexpected expenses or small, operational expenses.
- B. Williams said the compliance process was an added expense.
- J. Wheeler said all facilities expenses are budgeted under OHS, not River Bend.
- D. Corti suggested putting a budget discussion on the next agenda so everyone can properly read through the budget.
- There was general appreciation and thanks for the summary page.
- M. Gordon would have liked further clarification on the BES social worker position and repeated her request for a detailed accounting of positions, including a summary of changes in the accounting of positions. Explanations were not clear on the social worker and behavior interventionist support positions:
 - 1 full time social worker
 - 2 full time behavior support staff (1 at BES, 1 at NES)

Reports, 6:10OHS

- J. Wheeler reminded the group about the Dangers of Vaping assembly scheduled for April 28 for grades 7 and up. The area schools are invited to attend. There will be a public community presentation at 6:00 that evening.
- The lunch debt is \$7428.
- 'Puffs' rehearsals are underway. The play is about the Hufflepuffs from the HARRY POTTER series.
- The girls' basketball team is playing in the semi-finals against Lake Region.

BES

- The playground structure was opened today.
- 'Willy Wonka Jr' will be performed for the local schools this week, and for the community this weekend. 122 kids are involved with the production.
- The math committee will pilot Illustrative Math in the next academic year.
- May 1 is the Farm to School Festival lunch.

- B. Williams noted that BES and NES won a grant to attend this summer's New England Farm to School Symposium to be held at Shelburne Farm.

NES

- The 5-6 grades are enjoying the Shakespeare program they're working on.
- Illustrative Math will be piloted next year. BES and NES have been communicating about the program, lending support to one another.
- Literacy lessons, with teachers switching up between classrooms, is underway, and has been a great learning experience for teachers and students.
- Teacher collaboration scheduling is in the works.

T. Judas asked if the 3 schools will put a COVID-19 announcement on their websites' landing pages.

B. Williams said they were notified about lead content in the water after the state-mandated water testing, and faucets testing positive have been shut off. The state covers expenses to replace faucets and conduct testing to get to zero lead content.

Asbestos plans have been updated and are available to the public. There are no asbestos problems in the schools.

Community Pancake Breakfast, 6:35

Switch date to April 4 so budget is available to community prior to the meeting. The Board will warn the meeting and put together an agenda.

Policy, 6:40

Adoption

HC1

M. Gordon made a MOTION to adopt HC1, In-District Transfer Program. T. Judas seconded. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

- B. Williams and E. Knisley will make a public announcement, possibly this week, that the policy has been adopted and will make the form available.
 - Amy Haywood asked how requests from families with a sibling in the school will be considered. B. Williams said this needs further discussion; this could be part of the review process, and siblings may not be given a priority, but would be considered in the review process.
- K. Paxton asked about transportation, and how that applies to students who have transportation as part of their IEP. B. Williams said they will follow the law, and they will be obligated to transport them.

C24

M. Gordon made a MOTION to adopt C24 with 'students' replacing all instances of 'girls' and 'boys.' T. Judas seconded. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

Q&A Talking Points for April Annual Meeting, 7:00

- Prepare a hand-out for the meeting: sheet of budget changes, a simple list of position changes.
- B. Williams would like an annual listing, in December, of all the FTEs.
- K. Paxton suggests changing the budget preparation timeline. Start the process earlier.
- Take questions at the Pancake Breakfast and develop Talking Points from the concerns voiced at the breakfast.

Items for Next Month's Agenda, 7:10

Discussion of financials

Year-round budgeting

Policy adoption:

E20 Community Use of School Facilities

E21 Distribution of Non-School Sponsored Literature in Schools

Policy discussion:

H11 Gift Acceptance & Trust Fund Policy

Public Comment, 7:15

T. Judas's Letter to the Editor is in today's edition of the *Journal Opinion*.

Executive Session, Negotiations

On a motion by Melissa Gordon, seconded by Angela Colbeth, the Board voted unanimously to enter Executive Session at 7:20 PM

Exit Executive Session, 8:25

No action taken.

Adjournment, 8:25

A. Colbeth made a MOTION to adjourn. M. Gordon seconded. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

Respectfully Submitted,

Barbara Briggs