

**MINEOLA UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
MINEOLA, NY**

**Workshop Meeting MINUTES**

*The Mission of the Mineola Union Free School District is to inspire each student to be a life-long learner, pursue excellence, exhibit strength of character and contribute positively to a global society.*

\*\*\*\*\*

**Board Goals – 2009-2010**

- **Educational**
  - *To further expand the district initiative of differentiated instruction specifically denoting how schools plan to move student achievement from level to level as well as preventing student regression within and between levels.*
  - *To continue to develop our relationship with Winthrop Hospital to develop a career academy at the HS for students pursuing potential post HS opportunities.*
  - *To establish guidelines for the health and wellness of our children that encompasses curriculum, food program(s) and safety policies.*
- **Facilities**
  - *To investigate and embrace projects that incorporate 'green' technologies that over time will decrease our dependency on fossil fuels.*
- **Finance**
  - *To create a five year financial landscape that captures status quo and tax levy projections. Those projections will then be articulated to the community in order to open a dialogue about the future of Mineola.*

\*\*\*\*\*

**DATE: February 4, 2010**

**LOCATION: High School**

**OPEN WORK SESSION**

**7:00 p.m. Auditorium**

**Board of Education**

William Hornberger, President  
Terence Hale, Vice President  
John McGrath  
Laraine Salvatore  
Christine Napolitano

**Central Office**

Dr. Michael Nagler, Superintendent of Schools  
Sherri Goffman, Deputy Superintendent  
John Waters, Asst. Supt. of Finance & Oper.  
Janice Patterson, Asst. Supt. for Pupil Pers. Services  
Lori Dolan, Asst. District Clerk

**A. Call to Order**

At 7:00 p.m. the meeting was called to order by President Hornberger.

**B. Pledge of Allegiance**

**C. Reading of Mission**

**D. Moment of Silent Meditation**

**E. Dais & Visitor Introductions**

**F. Old Business**

Harold Dean, Administrative Coordinator for Best Practices and Research for Eastern Suffolk BOCES and the Long Island Regional Field Facilitator for the S'TAIR Project showed a presentation on the S'TAIR Program explained that the Mineola Middle School was being presented with a Certificate of Recognition for his leadership role in developing a program for educators working with students with developmental disabilities. S'TAIR is an acronym for Supporting Successful Strategies to Achieve Improved Results. Principal Mark Barth stated that he was honored to accept the award and recognized Assistant Principal Whitney Smith's leadership role in achieving the award.

The President of the Board of Education, Mr. Hornberger, inquired about the 2010-2011 District Calendar, as well as the status of the Science Labs. Superintendent Nagler responded that the calendar was on the agenda for approval, and that within the grant money, 2 science labs could be built at the Middle School and 2 at the High School.

**G. New Business**

**H. Consensus Agenda**

**1. 2010-2011 School District Calendar**

- a. That the Board of Education approves the proposed 2010-2011 school calendar as set forth in attachment "A".

**2. Retirement/Leave of Absence**

- a. That the Board of Education accepts a letter of resignation, with regret, from Sheryl Goffman, Deputy Superintendent, for the purpose of retirement, effective June 30, 2010.
- b. That the Board of Education accepts a letter of resignation, with regret, from Tina Guddat, part time Account Clerk, effective June 30, 2010.
- c. That the Board of Education grants a request to Amy Kuchynskas, for a leave of absence, for child rearing purposes, using sick days, starting approximately April 12, 2010.
- d. That the Board of Education grants a request to Allison Maffettone, for a leave of absence, for child-rearing purposes, using sick days, starting approximately January 4, 2010, followed by an unpaid leave of absence for the remain of the 2009-2010 school year.
- e. That the Board of Education approves a medical Leave of Absence for Claudia Domb, Registered Nurse, from January 13, 2010 through April 13, 2010, due to surgery.

**3. Appointment**

- a. That the Board of Education approves the appointment of Thomas Wilkens, to the position of Leave Replacement Earth Science Teacher, effective February 1, 2010 to June 30, 2010; salary, BA, Step 1, \$56,158.00.
- b. That the Board of Education approves the addition of Michael O’Gara, to the Per Diem Substitute Teacher list for Childhood Education (Grades 1-6).
- c. That the Board of Education approves the appointment of Fallon Bienstock, to the position of 45 Day Substitute ELA Teacher for Claudia Rudnet, effective January 25, 2010 to on or before June 30, 2010; salary: Days 1-20, \$90.00; Days 21-39, \$100.00; Days 40-45, \$110.00; Day 46 goes on contract salary, BA, Step 1, \$56,158.00 pro-rated.

**4. Field Trip(s)**

- a. That the Board of Education approves the following overnight or out-of-state field trips to:
  - Orchestra/Chorus – performing at Great Adventure, Jackson, NJ on Saturday April 17, 2010 and a Broadway Show in NYS on Sunday, April 18, 2010. No school time will be missed. No expense to the district.
  - Band Camp – Camp Iroquois Springs, Rock Hill, NY, Saturday, August 14, 2010 to Friday, August 20, 2010. No expense to the district.
- b. That the Board of Education approves an overnight/out-of-state field trip as follows: Varsity Baseball Team – Spring Training, High Schools in Virginia, from March 29, 2010 to April 3, 2010. No school time will be missed, during Spring Break. No expense to the district.

**RESOLUTION #52 – BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Board of Education approves Consensus Agenda items H.1.a. through H.4.b. as presented.

**Motion:** John McGrath  
**Second:** Christine Napolitano

Discussion: The Superintendent of Schools expressed regret with regard to the retirement of Mrs. Goffman, Deputy Superintendent. The members of the Board thanked her for her service and wished her all the best. Mrs. Goffman stated that she had wonderful colleagues, teachers and secretarial staff and thanked the support of the Superintendent and the Board of Education.

**Yes:** Christine Napolitano  
 John McGrath  
 Terence Hale  
 Laraine Salvatore  
 William Hornberger

**No:** None

**Passed:** Yes

## **I. Superintendent's Reports**

Sherri Goffman presented "Grade Configuration", stating that research is limited and that existing research on the best grade configuration is inconclusive, and that by building on strengths and minimizing weaknesses found with any configuration, effective educational services can be achieved regardless of the particular grade span. With regard to cluster grouping grades, Mrs. Goffman explained the advantages and disadvantages. One major advantage was the collaboration among teachers on specific age groups and the ability to provide previously unavailable educational opportunities. One disadvantage was the extra transition of students and the loss of neighborhood schools. Mrs. Goffman explained that no particular sequence of grade spans is perfect and does not guarantee student achievement or social adjustment and that the focus should be on developing positive potential within any grade configuration. Mrs. Salvatore commented that she was happy to see that there were only two points that effect the education of students and felt that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages and asked if Mrs. Goffman agreed. Mrs. Goffman replied that she feels that there are a lot of educational advantages to having more students at a grade level, but that you should consider which grades and how many. Mrs. Goffman added that optimally, she would look at a primary center and an interim center as ideal. Mr. McGrath stated that he felt that Mrs. Goffman's presentation was very informative but that there was no way of knowing if clustering and thereby changing the current configuration would improve student performance based on the lack of research and data. He also stated that there might be no more collaboration in a clustering model than there is with the current configuration. Mrs. Goffman stated that the teachers in the district are eager to collaborate as a total grade. Mrs. Goffman again stated that with any grade configuration, if you accentuate the positive and plan accordingly and develop a structure and support for whichever configuration you choose, you will be successful. Mr. Hornberger stated that he attended the Meadow Drive PTA meeting and that with regard to the clustering disadvantages, i.e., extra transitions and transportation and reduced parental involvement, and loss of neighborhood schools, those were raised as concerns by the parents. He further stated that he had spoken to Dr. Nagler about putting together a parent community group perhaps comprised of District Council and the PTA's to discuss viable options and address community feedback, working together educationally as a community. Dr. Nagler stated that this evening was the last public meeting in framing the problem, adding that there would be a real issue with losing program if we do nothing, further stating that the scenario that he gave was a plausible one, but not the only one. He further stated that there needs to be a discussion with regard to closing schools and the best way to do it, or not.

A motion was made that the Board of Education direct the Superintendent to form a committee to explore possible grade reconfiguration models.

**Motion:** John McGrath

**Second:** Terence Hale

Discussion:

**RESOLUTION #53 – BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Board of Education directs the Superintendent of Schools to for a committee to explore possible reconfiguration models.

**Yes:** Christine Napolitano  
John McGrath  
Terence Hale  
Laraine Salvatore  
William Hornberger

**No:** None

Passed: Yes

Mr. Hornberger recommended Christine Napolitano to act as the Board representative on the Committee. Mr. McGrath asked the Superintendent if they could get a more definitive figure with regard to construction costs for a reconfiguration, and the Superintendent responded that until we know what we are doing that would be very difficult, adding that he was using a conservative figure of \$500/sq. ft., but that it also depended on what type of construction we are doing, i.e. a two story structure versus a single story structure. Mr. Hornberger then opened the meeting to public comment.

Public Comment:

- ❖ A member of the public expressed concern with regard to closing two schools in one year. Dr. Nagler responded that it would be over two years; one building per year. He further expressed concern over additional transportation costs, and Dr. Nagler responded that any reconfiguration would have to include a reconfiguration of transportation guidelines. The member of the public volunteered to be on the committee and commended the Board for their behavior.
- ❖ A member of the public expressed concern with regard to closing schools and clustering grades in order to save money, adding that multiple transitions leads to transitional achievement loss and sense of belonging and community. She further stated that she would support a budget that would eliminate the need for closing schools.
- ❖ A member of the public stated that she agrees that money and education are intertwined, and therefore asks the question, what is the financial cost to her, and what is the educational cost to her child. She stated that the financial cost, depending on percentage, was about \$10 per month, but that there would be a significant educational cost to her child, adding that her child is doing well now due to small class size and parent/teacher involvement and that small neighborhood schools are a vital component of her child's education. She further stated that she would target the area of teacher's salaries. Dr. Nagler clarified that the 80% of the budget is not just teachers' salaries; it is all salaries and benefits.
- ❖ A member of the public expressed concern for construction costs and number of transitions, as well as construction occurring while children are in school. She urged members of the public to ask to see more options in order to vote accordingly.
- ❖ A member of the public stated that he would like to understand more about the committee, and would like to be on it. He then asked the Superintendent if he should be on this committee or the Finance Committee and the Superintendent responded that the Finance Committee looks at the numbers and suggested he speak to Mr. Waters about that.

- ❖ A member of the public questioned why a parent would become less involved in a clustering configuration, adding that his children flourished during the time of the closing of Cross Street School. He urged the public to consider all of the options stating that if we don't take action now, where will we be in the future?
- ❖ A member of the public expressed concern that, should you have 3 young children there is the potential to have them at three different schools and that would lead to diminished involvement at each of the schools. She also expressed concerns with regard to clustering and the impact of transitions on education. She further expressed concern that the community will not support a budget without a definitive plan.
- ❖ A member of the public spoke in favor of maintaining the current configuration, citing a concern for the educational impact of clustering and construction costs. She further expressed concern with regard to transportation times with several young students attending different schools, as well as a concern over the number of transitions.
- ❖ A member of the public spoke in support of closing schools in an effort to maintain programs, and a concern over the rise in cost per student over the last 20 years. He further called for a renegotiation of union contracts.
- ❖ A member of the public expressed concern over the timeline of construction.
- ❖ A member of the public congratulated Mrs. Goffman on her retirement and spoke in favor of maintaining the current configuration, citing the loss of community. He expressed concern that we are rushing to a decision on closing schools over a 1.5% increase in the budget. He also volunteered to be on the committee.
- ❖ A member of the public expressed concern for the amount of teachers' salaries. Dr. Nagler stated that by law, contracts are in effect until they are renegotiated.

Mr. Hornberger thanked everyone for their comments.

## **J. Executive Session**

At 9:41 p.m. a motion was made to go into Executive Session for the purposes of discussing the medical, financial, credit or employment history of a particular person or corporation, or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal or removal of a particular person or corporation.

**Motion:** John McGrath

**Second:** Laraine Salvatore

**Yes:** Christine Napolitano  
 John McGrath  
 Terence Hale  
 Laraine Salvatore  
 William Hornberger

**No:** None

**Passed:** Yes

## **K. Adjournment**

At 10:15 a motion was made to adjourn this meeting of the Board of Education.

**Motion:** John McGrath

**Second:** Terence Hale

**Yes:** Christine Napolitano  
John McGrath  
Terence Hale  
Laraine Salvatore  
William Hornberger

**No:** None

**Passed:** Yes

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Dolan  
Assistant District Clerk