



**BELCHERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
REGULAR SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
May 14, 2013**

**LOCATION:** Swift River Elementary School Library  
**TIME:** 7:00 pm

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

Dr. Linda Tsoumas, Chair (present); Mr. Eric Weiss, Vice Chair (present); Ms. Clare Popowich, Secretary (present); Ms. Beverly Phaneuf, Member (present); Mr. Richard Fritsch, Member (present)

**ADMINISTRATION:**

Dr. Judith Houle, Superintendent of Schools (present); Mr. Brian Cameron, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning (present); Mr. Edward Dunn, Contracted School Business Manager (present); Ms. Kristi Guzzo, Director of Student Support Services (present); Mr. Ben Admussen, Data Administrator (present)

**BHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES:**  
(not present)

**VISITORS:**

Mr. William Barnett, Select Board member; Ms. Laura Anderman, CHCS Teacher; Ms. Victoria Blunt, CHCS Teacher; Mr. Jim Russell, Republican reporter; Ms. Mona Griffin

**MINUTES**

- I. Call to order  
Dr. Tsoumas called the Regular School Committee meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
- II. Special awards and presentations  
None
- III. Update from BHS Student Advisory Council representatives  
None; Dr. Houle noted that all School Committee members had been presented with formal invitations to attend the Belchertown High School graduation on June 2, 2013.
- IV. Public comment regarding items on the agenda  
None
- V. Approval of minutes
  - A. April 30, 2013  
MOTION: Ms. Phaneuf moved to approve the minutes of the April 30, 2013 Regular School Committee meeting, as presented. Mr. Weiss seconded the motion.  
VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously
- VI. Reports and recommendations of the Superintendent
  - A. Field trip request: CHCS Grade 6 to the Connecticut Science Center  
Ms. Anderman and Ms. Blunt presented their request for an out-of-state field trip by CHCS Grade 6 to the Connecticut Science Center on Thursday, May 30, 2013. They explained that this trip will provide a new hands-on science experience for the students and a chance to explore exhibit galleries (research labs and creative workshops),

rooftop garden, sports lab, and many other activities. Transportation will be provided by First Student, and fees will be paid by students, chaperones and the PTO. Dr. Houle stated that she had reviewed the field trip request and found all the paperwork to be in order according to policy, and she therefore recommends approval by the School Committee of this request.

MOTION: Mr. Weiss moved to approve the field trip request to the Connecticut Science Center by CHCS Grade 6 on May 30, 2013, as presented. Ms. Phaneuf seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

COMMENT: Mr. Fritsch asked if this would be an all-day event, and the teachers confirmed that it would be and that students will bring their own bag lunches to eat on the plaza.

B. Contract: eSped – Student Support Services management system

Ms. Guzzo and Mr. Admussen presented their request to enter into a contract with a new company for the operation of the Student Support Services management system. This department has previously been using SEMS Tracker, but there have been many glitches with that system. In addition, Mr. Admussen has had many security concerns with the program, and the company has not addressed them in a timely manner. The new program that is being proposed is called eSped, and Mr. Dunn explained that once it is implemented, it will be less expensive to run than the current program, and will have comparable start-up costs. Mr. Admussen also noted that the transition to the new program should not be problematic, with eSped providing the transfer of information into the new system. In that regard, the vendor had explained that encryption will take place for confidentiality purposes. Dr. Tsoumas inquired as to where this contract will fit into the budget process, and it was explained that funds will be used from both the current budget cycle (implementation and information transfer) and FY 2013-2014 (contract and training).

MOTION: Mr. Weiss moved to approve the contract with eSped as the Student Support Services management system with a three year license effective immediately through June 30, 2016, as presented. Ms. Phaneuf seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

C. June School Committee meetings

Dr. Houle stated that a change in the June School Committee meetings will be needed due to scheduling conflicts. It was decided that the June 11, 2013 meeting would remain on the calendar, but that the June 25, 2013 meeting will be cancelled. Dr. Houle felt that any agenda items could be handled at one June meeting. She also noted that any curriculum documents that were not finished by June 11<sup>th</sup> could be presented at the July School Committee meeting. That date will be determined in June as the FY 2013-2014 School Committee calendar will be an agenda item for that evening's meeting.

VII. Unfinished business  
None

VIII. New business

Mr. Weiss announced that he will be resigning from the School Committee, effective July 1, 2013, due to time constraints with work and family obligations. Although he regrets this decision, he said that he feels it would not be fair to be unable to devote the full attention



that his commitment as School Committee Vice-Chair requires. Mr. Weiss stated that he will fulfill all his subcommittee requirements by July 1<sup>st</sup>, and expressed his desire to remain on the Playground Committee. He also commented that he would welcome the opportunity to serve the town again in the future as time allows. Dr. Tsoumas told Mr. Weiss that his presence will be missed on the School Committee and thanked him for his years of service to the school district.

IX. Reports of subcommittees/representative to Collaborative for Educational Services

A. Collaborative for Educational Services (Ms. Phaneuf)

Ms. Phaneuf reported that the collaborative met on Wednesday, May 8<sup>th</sup>. First copies of the FY 2014 budget were presented, which will be reviewed by the finance subcommittee and brought forward for a vote by the Board of Governors in June. Approximately 70% of funding for the CES comes from two grants, both of which will be running out this year. Other business included the approval of FY 2014 SPED tuitions for the fall, and also an update on the Executive Director search. In that regard, Ms. Phaneuf reported that out of five consulting firms, one had been chosen but due to cost, that must now go out to bid. A decision on a new timeline for choosing the new Executive Director will also be necessary. No date for the next meeting has been set at this time.

B. Curriculum & Instruction (Ms. Phaneuf/Ms. Popowich)

1. Notification of school books change: Mathematics, K-8, pursuant to c. 71, §50

Ms. Phaneuf stated that at a Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee meeting held earlier this evening, Mr. Cameron had reported on the two math series programs that were piloted over a 2-3 month period, and he presented that information to the School Committee. He noted that the two piloted programs were the Pearson series of Envision (K-6)/Core Math-Digits (7-8), and the McGraw-Hill series of My Math (K-5)/Glencoe Math (6-8). Quotes were given by both companies, and the search committee used various criteria (alignment with Common Core/State Curriculum Frameworks, components for differentiated instruction, technology-integrated instruction, cross-curricular integration, etc.) to make its decision. The final recommendation of the committee was to adopt the McGraw-Hill textbook and digital series of My Math/Glencoe. Mr. Cameron added that this company provided excellent customer service as well as a comprehensive package which will allow for differentiated instruction both below and beyond the average academic level, and continuity of instruction for K-8, having the same terminology and focus. He stated that the total purchase for the McGraw-Hill series (K-8) for 5 years of consumables and 2 additional years of digital online subscription would be \$173,617.01.

There will be no vote this evening on this proposal for school books change in Mathematics, K-8, as this is the first reading (a notice of intent, according to MGL c.71, §50). The School Committee will vote on this proposal at the second reading which will take place at the May 28, 2013 meeting.

C. Healthy & Safer Schools Advisory Committee (Ms. Popowich/Ms. Phaneuf)

Ms. Popowich reported that the May 15, 2013 meeting has been postponed to the beginning of the school year, which will allow enough time for the Pinwheels for Peace project to move forward. Dr. Houle will also be putting together a task force over the summer to work on safety and security protocols.

D. Jessica's Boundless Playground Committee (Mr. Weiss)

Mr. Weiss reported that the Playground Committee was awarded an additional \$40,000.00 in funding from the CPC last night, and he noted that the next few meetings will deal with more fundraising efforts. Mr. Weiss also stated that a tentative timeline has been established, with the hope of breaking ground on this project in a year. Dr. Houle proposed that Ms. Paula Fitzgerald, the newly hired principal at Chestnut Hill Community School, be appointed to the Playground Committee since the playground will be situated on CHCS grounds.

MOTION: Mr. Weiss moved to approve the appointment of Ms. Paula Fitzgerald to the Playground Committee, as presented. Ms. Phaneuf seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

E. Personnel & Policy (Ms. Popowich/Dr. Tsoumas)

1. Superintendent's summative evaluation: process and timeline

Ms. Popowich reported that at a Personnel & Policy Subcommittee meeting held earlier this evening, she and Dr. Tsoumas had reviewed the end-of-cycle summative evaluation report for the Superintendent. The review process will begin with the goals that Dr. Houle will provide, followed by standards and indicators, and finally the evaluator's assessment of the Superintendent's progress toward those goals and her performance on standards, as well as a rating of her overall summative performance. It was noted that one item (Step 4: Rate Impact on Student Learning) will not apply this year and therefore will not be rated. The evaluator will also write a narrative (comments and analysis) and sign the document, and this completed summative evaluation report will be presented to the School Committee as an agenda item for the June 11<sup>th</sup> meeting. It was also noted that since the mid-cycle report was done, that information will not be duplicated. Dr. Tsoumas discussed how the evaluation form will be managed, and it was explained that only one report will be recorded by the Chair, with information populated by Dr. Houle, and which she and the Superintendent will sign. This will be presented at the June 11, 2013 School Committee meeting, as it has to be done in public session.

F. Property & Transportation (Mr. Weiss/Mr. Fritsch)

None

G. Technology Advisory Committee (Mr. Fritsch)

Mr. Fritsch reported that this subcommittee recently met for a year-end review. The members checked their benchmarks, tasks and timelines, with regard to technology use in the district. He stated that he feels while significant progress has been made, there is still much more to be accomplished. Mr. Fritsch also noted that more staff is being sent out to visit other districts to gather information on their technology use in order to bring future recommendations to the School Committee. Other business at the meeting included a review of the Edcamp Professional Day held in March, which yielded great results, and a plan is being made to schedule another such event next year.

X. Correspondence

A. Agenda: May 14, 2013

B. Minutes: April 30, 2013



- D. Out-of-State Field Trip form and backup: CHCS Grade 6 trip to the Connecticut Science Center
  - E. Contract: eSped
  - F. Mathematics textbook proposal
    - 1. Instructional Resource Form
    - 2. Quote from McGraw-Hill
    - 3. M.G.L. c. 71, §50
  - G. End-of-Cycle Summative Evaluation Report: Superintendent (MA DESE)
- XI. Vote to enter into Executive Session under M.G.L., c. 30A, §21, Part (3), to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with Unit A, Teachers, Unit B, Secretaries, Unit C, Custodians, Unit D, Food Service Workers, Unit E, Paraprofessionals, and with nonunion school administrators as conducting said business in open session would have a detrimental effect on the School Committee's negotiating position. The Committee will not return to open session.

Dr. Tsoumas – yes  
Mr. Weiss - yes  
Ms. Popowich – yes  
Ms. Phaneuf - yes  
Mr. Fritsch – yes

The School Committee entered into Executive Session at 7:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

*Kathryn A. Petersen*

Kathryn A. Petersen  
Non-Confidential Recording Secretary to the School Committee

School Committee members' signatures:

Linda Tsoumas, Linda Tsoumas, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_, Eric Weiss, Vice Chair

Clare Popowich, Clare Popowich, Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_, Beverly Phaneuf, Member

Richard Fritsch, Richard Fritsch, Member

*The mission of the Belchertown Public Schools is to ensure that every student meets with success every day. To that end, we pledge to ensure that we have rigorous, standards-based curriculum; instruction designed to meet the needs of diverse learners in every classroom; and access to the global learning community via state-of-the-art technology in schools that are communities of respect and civility for all.*

**2011-2015 Strategic Plan Goals (adopted by the Belchertown School Committee, 3/1/11):**

- Goal #1: To have guaranteed (standards-based and implemented by all), viable (doable and accessible to every student), seamless K-12 curriculum in every content area.
- Goal #2: To have rigorous (standards-based), relevant (grounded in 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills), differentiated instructional practices with the ability to access the global learning community via technology available to every learner.
- Goal #3: To implement a plan to ensure that our students understand the importance of acceptance, tolerance, and respect supported by all adults in the community.

The Belchertown School Committee conducts its business in open session pursuant to Chapter 30A, Section 21 of the Massachusetts General Laws. The public is welcome to comment only on items on the agenda for this meeting as noted above. If you wish to address the School Committee regarding an item not on the agenda for this meeting, please contact Dr. Judith Houle, Superintendent of Schools, at 413.323.0423 or via email at [jhoule@belchertown.org](mailto:jhoule@belchertown.org) to determine the best way to address your concerns.

BELCHERTOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
REGULAR SESSION  
SIGN IN SHEET

DATE: 5-14-13

PLS. PRINT NAME BELOW

Laura Anderman

Ben Amussen

Kristi Guzzo

Jim Russell

Victoria Blunt

Killian Barnett

Mona Griffin