

Our mission is to provide rigorous and varied educational opportunities that challenge and engage all students to attain their highest level of intellectual, social, physical, and emotional growth. (2007)

LITCHFIELD SCHOOL BOARD - SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT NO. 27

Litchfield, New Hampshire 03052

APPROVED MINUTES

August 12, 2009

(approved as amended 8-26-09)

Present:

Mr. Dennis Miller, Chair
Mr. Ralph Boehm, Vice Chair
Mrs. Cindy Couture, Board Member
Mrs. Pat Jewett, Board Member
Mr. Jason Guerrette, Board Member
Dr. Elaine Cutler, Superintendent
Ms. Amanda Lecaroz, Director of Curriculum & Instruction
Mrs. Michele E. Flynn, Administrative Assistant

1) Public Session – Call to Order – Pledge of Allegiance 6:30 p.m.

Mr. Miller called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2) Review and Revision of Agenda

Revisions to the agenda included: the addition of Resignation under Business Affairs; addition of NHSBA to Committee Reports; and in Non-Public Session, the addition of a student matter.

3) School Board Members' Comments

There were no Board comments.

4) Summary of Non-Public Actions

Mr. Miller read the actions from the non-public session on July 29, 2009.

From the July 29, 2009 Non-Public Session:

Mrs. Jewett made a motion to approve the non-public minutes as written. Mrs. Couture seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

Mrs. Couture made a motion to accept the nomination of Lisa Petry as Director of Guidance at CHS for a six month temporary contract for a salary of \$36,214.29 for the 2009-2010 school year. Mr. Boehm seconded. The motion carried 4-0-1, with Mr. Guerrette abstaining.

Mrs. Couture made a motion to accept the nomination of Christina Halbrooks as English teacher at CHS for a salary of \$36,155 for the 2009-2010 school year. Mr. Boehm seconded. The motion carried 4-0-1, with Mr. Guerrette abstaining.

5) Community Input

Sue Ann Johnson, 35 Locke Mill Drive, mentioned placing hand sanitizers around schools as preventative for H1N1. Dr. Cutler indicated it is on the Administrative agenda for August 17.

Mrs. Johnson expressed her concerns with the results of the Short Story Review Committee's report to the School Board. She prepared and distributed her own evaluation of the stories that were reviewed by the Committee. Mrs. Johnson indicated that studies show if children are exposed to violence it desensitizes them to violence. She believes that if children are repeatedly exposed to violence, then children are more likely to have violent behavior and tendencies. She also indicated that studies show that children accept sexual behavior [in books or on television] the more they are exposed to sexual content. Mrs. Johnson commented that, in her opinion, 70% of the 45 stories reviewed contained violent content; 23% contained sexual content. She believes that 40 of the 45 stories had a negative connotation. Mrs. Johnson indicated that the course should contain selections with positive messages and

that the course curriculum guidelines are deficient. She commented that this school belongs to the people who should have an equal voice in the materials that are presented to the students.

6) Communications to the Board

1) NHIAA Sportsmanship Award

Mr. Miller shared the announcement that CHS will be receiving the NHIAA/National Federation of State High School Association Award of Excellence, which will be presented to CHS for exhibiting outstanding sportsmanship this past school year.

7) Recommended Action

a) Business Affairs

1) Draft School Board Minutes:

a) Public Minutes July 29, 2009

Mrs. Couture made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Mrs. Jewett seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

2) Acceptance of Donations

Dr. Cutler presented two donations to the Board: a sound board, three file cabinets, and four bookcases donated by Kathleen Reilly; a television for the athletic department donated by the Miller family.

Mrs. Jewett made a motion to accept the donation of the sound board, three file cabinets, and four bookcases from Kathleen Reilly; and the donation of a 60" rear projection television for the CHS athletic department from the Miller family with appreciation and gratitude. Mrs. Couture seconded. The motion carried 4-0-1, with Mr. Miller abstaining.

3) Primex Contracts for Workers' Compensation and Property & Liability

Dr. Cutler presented to the Board the Primex contracts for workers' compensation and for property & liability.

Mr. Boehm made a motion to approve the Resolutions to enter the Primex 5% multi-year discount program for Workers' Compensation and Property & Liability through July 1, 2012. Mrs. Jewett seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

4) 2009-2010 Board Goals:

a) 2008-2009 Board Accomplishments

b) Community Engagement Plan

c) District Newsletter Review

Board members discussed goal suggestions and recommendations for the 2009-2010 school year.

Mr. Guerrette queried about the goal relative to student achievement. He believes that the assessments are not adequate to measure the increase of targeted growth. Ms. Lecaroz explained that teachers teach to the standards and not to the test. She noted that there are some standards that cannot be assessed, but we still teach those standards. The assessment tests (NWEA & NECAP) are used as a measure and the RIT scores are used to measure the growth of the education program.

Mr. Guerrette was concerned that Objective A leaves 20% of the students behind and commented that there should be target growth goals for all students. Dr. Cutler noted that the District has a plan to increase achievement in all students. She indicated that the standardized tests are very important in the State of New Hampshire. Teachers in the District teach to the standards that all students need to know.

Mr. Guerrette continued to voice his concerns on the increase of student achievement. Mr. Miller suggested that Board members should focus on the objective of the goal and if the goal needs to be continued.

Mrs. Couture suggested that the goal should be broadly reviewed and all areas considered (increased achievement on assessment tests, index scores for sub-groups, proficient with distinction, struggling students). Mrs. Couture commented that she believed all angles are covered and that the District is not leaving any students behind.

Mrs. Couture queried about Objective F: *Meet or exceed accountability requirements to be determined by the State of NH by the recommended timeframe.* Dr. Cutler indicated that the state requires districts to comply with accountability; however, the criteria has not yet been determined.

Board members suggested revising Objective F to read: *Meet accountability (SB180) to be determined by the State of NH by the recommended timeframe.*

Mr. Guerrette referred the 2009 update under Objective C, with particular note to the CHS All A's Celebration. He commented that only pertinent information should appear as updates under objectives. Mrs. Couture suggested a new objective to recognize academic achievement. A new objective will be added to the goals: *Objective G. Celebrate outstanding academic achievement at all schools.*

Mrs. Couture expressed concerns about Objective C under Goal 2 (Track alumni accomplishments). She commented that we should be encouraging input from existing students as well as graduates, and suggested that student government is the mechanism for that to happen. Mr. Guerrette disagreed commenting that student government should be engaged at the school level. Board members discussed suggestions, but decided that the goal would be difficult to implement and measure.

Board members briefly discussed Goal 3, *Maintain a safe, supportive, and effective learning environment.* Objective D, *Increase student engagement as measured by the My Voice survey results,* was revised to read: *Increase student engagement,* as the My Voice surveys were discontinued by the NH DOE.

Board members discussed Goal 4, revising two of the objectives. Objective A will read: *To expand an adult education program for the Litchfield Community.*

Board members also discussed Objective B, which refers to the distribution of the District newsletter. Board members discussed how it is distributed and the cost of publication. Board members were in favor of continuing the goal with expansion of electronic delivery options. Dr. Cutler indicated that she and Mrs. Flynn discussed and drafted a content outline for each quarter, which will be presented to the Board on August 26. The Objective will be revised to read: *Increase the publication of the District Community Newsletter to quarterly and expand electronic delivery options.*

5) Resignation

Dr. Cutler presented a staff resignation to the Board. She announced that Peter Lubelczyk, Assistant Principal at LMS, will be leaving the District to take the position of Principal of an elementary school in Manchester.

Mrs. Jewett made a motion to accept the resignation of Peter Lubelczyk as Assistant Principal of LMS with regret. Mr. Boehm seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

Mr. Guerrette made a motion to release Peter Lubelczyk from his contract as Assistant Principal of LMS. Mrs. Jewett seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

6) Manifest

The manifest was circulated and signed by the Board.

8) New Business

a) Short Story Curriculum Report: Review/Approve

Dr. Cutler and Ms. Lecaroz presented the Short Story Curriculum report to the Board. Ms. Lecaroz noted that it is a complete report of the Review Committee's work in determining the short story curriculum for the high school elective class. She explained that 46 stories were selected by the teachers for review. Teachers included the factors they used to select the stories. The teachers chose from primarily available resources or online/free resources due to copyright restrictions. All the stories chosen meet the core competencies. They chose a wide range of stories in terms of writing style, time period, location, author gender and popularity, genre, and theme. The one semester, elective course is aimed at juniors and seniors. The number of stories selected was necessary to give students a wide range. The stories selected involve critical thinking, literary skills, literary terminology, and literary content. Themes and genre are required by the NCT National Standards.

Ms. Lecaroz indicated that 7 parents, 5 teachers, and 7 students were chosen for the committee. 7 parents, 5 students, and 5 teachers completed the reviews and submitted responses. The data for the report was taken directly from the short story rating sheets; however, the comments have not been collated in a formal database.

Ms. Lecaroz explained that the committee drafted a new course description that includes a warning to parents and students regarding the content of the materials on the recommended reading list. The course overview will be created complete with texts teachers will use in the course and alternate selections will be available for students to read.

Ms. Lecaroz explained that the committee rated each story based on the criteria in the Selection of Instructional Materials policy and on the rubric, using an agree/disagree scale. Students on the committee were high school students who were AP or Pre-AP level and found that the readability of some stories was low. However, stories were not removed from the list based solely on the readability results. The stories were narrowed from 46 to 43 based on the rating results.

Ms. Lecaroz explained how committee members were chosen. She met with Dr. Cutler, Mr. Manseau, and the English department teachers who looked at a cross section of students and parents. Students who will not be taking the class were selected and parents of high school students were selected because they have the best understanding of what is developmentally appropriate for high school students.

Board members discussed the report and review process at length. Board concerns included the following:

- Mr. Guerrette was concerned that as a worst case scenario, potentially every student who takes the class could opt for an alternate reading assignment. Ms. Lecaroz was confident that a worst case scenario would not present itself and that the teachers can direct the class.
- Mr. Guerrette disagreed with the committee selection process. He believes that the selection process should have been expanded to include all residents. Dr. Cutler indicated that it is the responsibility of the Superintendent to form committees.
- Mr. Guerrette was concerned how often the curriculum would be revised. Ms. Lecaroz indicated that the curriculum will be revised at the next Language Arts curriculum revision cycle.
- Mrs. Jewett was concerned with the profanity used in many of the stories.
- Mr. Boehm was concerned that those who set the curriculum should be cognizant of the demographics of who we are teaching.
- Mr. Guerrette was concerned that we are exposing children to inappropriate issues. Mrs. Couture indicated that there is a mechanism in place for parents to request alternate reading materials should any of the selections on the recommended list conflict with personal values. Dr. Cutler indicated that parents can still challenge materials according to policy.

Mr. Guerrette made a motion to re-evaluate the selected short stories based on policy criteria with a wider selection of community members by inviting the entire community to participate. Mrs. Jewett seconded.

Board members discussed parameters of the suggested motion at length. Mr. Guerrette called the question. ***The motion failed 2-3-0, with Mr. Miller, Mr. Boehm, and Mrs. Couture voting in the negative.***

Mr. Miller made a motion to approve the revised short story curriculum until the next Language Arts curriculum review. Mrs. Couture seconded. The motion carried 3-2-0, with Mr. Guerrette and Mrs. Jewett voting in the negative.

- b) Policy Work Session
 - 1) Traffic & Parking Controls (ECD)
 - 2) Professional Staff Hiring (GCF)
 - 3) Employee Job Actions (HP)
 - 4) Employee Job Actions: Unauthorized Employee Absences) (HPA)

The above policies will be deferred to the September policy meeting.

5) Early Graduation (IKFA)

Dr. Cutler indicated that the Board asked for clarification on a previous request for early graduation. Dr. Cutler noted that the District currently has no policy in place for early graduation; however, procedures exist in the CHS handbook. Dr. Cutler presented a policy for early graduation to the Board. Board members made a minor revision.

Mr. Guerrette made a motion to approve the policy for a 1st Reading as amended. Mr. Boehm seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

c) Reconsideration of Policies (Amend, Clarify, Rescind, Reconsider)

1) The People & Their School District (AB, Rescinded 9/3/08)

This policy will be deferred to the September policy meeting.

2) School Superintendent (CB, Amend)

Board members discussed a revision to the policy.

Mr. Guerrette made a motion to approve the policy as amended. Mrs. Jewett seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

3) Student Accident Reports (EBBB, Clarification)

Mrs. Flynn asked the Board for a clarification on the wording relative to accident reporting. An amendment was suggested by the Joint Loss Management Committee (Safety Committee). Board members agreed to revise the policy.

Mr. Guerrette made a motion to approve the policy as amended. Mrs. Jewett seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

4) Complaint Policy (GBK, Amend)

A minor revision was made to the policy.

Mr. Guerrette made a motion to approve the policy as amended. Mr. Boehm seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

5) Home Education Instruction (IHBG, Amend)

6) Distance Learning (IIMB, Amend)

The above policies will be deferred to the September policy meeting.

7) Selection of Instruction Resources (IJL/IJL-R, Amend)

Board members discussed policy revisions. Mr. Guerrette suggested adding a statement to the policy regarding criteria used to select materials. The statement included the exclusion of materials that contain sexual connotations, violence, profanity, gender choice, drugs, and alcohol. Mr. Guerrette agreed to forward the wording to the SAU. Board members requested feedback from administrators, librarians, and legal counsel regarding the policy with revisions and inclusion of the suggested statement. The policy will be revisited at the September policy meeting.

8) Student Attendance & Absences (JH/JH-R, Amend)

A revision was made to the policy relative to student absences and participation in school activities.

Mr. Boehm made a motion to approve the policy as amended. Mrs. Jewett seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

9) Skateboards, Rollerblades, & Scooters (JHFF, Amend)

Dr. Cutler reported that the District received clarification from Primex regarding their recommendation on prohibiting skateboards, rollerblades, & scooters from school property.

Mr. Boehm made a motion to approve the policy as amended. Mr. Guerrette seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

10) Right to Know (KBA/KBA-R, Rescind)

This policy will be deferred to the September policy meeting.

9) **Old Business**

- 1) Policies, 2nd Reading
 - a) Authorized Signatures (DGA)

Mr. Boehm made a motion to approve the policy. Mr. Guerrette seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

10) **Committee Reports**

- 1) Selectmen

Mrs. Jewett reported that the town will be dedicating a monument in memory of Roland Bergeron. Governor Lynch will attend the dedication ceremony. A date has not been announced. She reported that Selectmen are working on budgets.

Mr. Boehm announced that the police department now uses the Nixel notification system to alert residents in Litchfield regarding community messages and emergencies.

- 2) NHSBA

Mrs. Couture reported that the NHSBA Executive Committee met with the Executive Director of the Local Government Center and discussed the NH Retirement litigation that is being brought forth by the NH Municipal Advocate and not the NH Local Government Center. The litigation has not yet been filed, but 77% of the municipalities in New Hampshire have joined in and contributed to the proposed litigation. She noted that the lawsuit will be put to a vote of the NHSBA Board in September.

Mr. Guerrette conveyed a request for clarification relative to the comment Mr. Boehm made at the last meeting regarding the loss of \$850,000 to the town. Mr. Boehm clarified that the loss will be in education aid, but is not targeted for this budget year. Dr. Cutler further clarified that the loss in education aid is targeted for the 2012 fiscal year.

11) **Community Input**

Sue Ann Johnson, 35 Locke Mill Drive, repeated her concerns over the elective English course and the story selections that were approved. She thanked the Board for the progress that has been made, but disagrees with allowing this type of material in the schools. Mrs. Johnson also made reference to the It's a Mystery course in which some stories include sexual content. She believes that the course description should be labeled appropriately as it may not be accurately descriptive of what is presented in the class. Mrs. Johnson expressed her disagreement with the selection of the committee members.

Laura Gandia, 3 Chamberlain Drive, expressed her concern regarding the selected short stories and the committee selection. She expressed her displeasure at the committee selection process and the inappropriate content of the recommended stories. She indicated that 80% of the people that spoke to the Board at the June 24 meeting did not read these stories. Ms. Gandia disagreed with the course description, claiming that there is not enough depth in regard to the recommended stories and does not reflect what is taught. She indicated that she has spoken to many people about this issue and the overwhelming majority indicated they would not want their children exposed to such materials. Ms. Gandia indicated that there is a difference between parenting and educating and she does not want teachers parenting her children. She was concerned that with all the publicity surrounding this course, the course will attract a large audience of students. She believes that the issues raised in the stories are not contemporary issues. Ms. Gandia repeated her displeasure with the selection of committee members. She indicated that the Board is not keeping the best interest of the students in mind.

Mr. Miller announced that the rebroadcast of the meeting will not contain more than four hours of video/audio replay.

12) **Non-Public Session: RSA 91-A:3II (a-c)**

[Minutes of Non-Public Session are written under separate cover.]

Mrs. Couture made a motion to go into non-public session at 10:48 p.m. under RSA 91-A:3II (a) The dismissal, promotion or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee, or the investigation of

any charges against him, unless the employee affected (1) has a right to a meeting and (2) requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted. (b) The hiring of any person as a public employee. (c) Matters, which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of the body or agency itself, unless such person requests an open meeting. Mr. Boehm seconded. The motion carried by roll call: Mr. Miller, yes; Mrs. Couture, yes; Mr. Boehm, yes; Mrs. Jewett, yes; Mr. Guerrette, no.

13) Return to Public Session

Mr. Guerrette made a motion to return to public session at 11:08 p.m. Mrs. Jewett seconded. The motion carried by roll call: Mr. Miller, yes; Mrs. Couture, yes; Mr. Boehm, yes; Mrs. Jewett, yes; Mr. Guerrette, yes.

14) Adjourn

Mrs. Couture made a motion to adjourn at 11:10 p.m. Mrs. Jewett seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

15) Upcoming Meetings

>Litchfield School Board: August 26, 2009, September 2, 9, 23, 2009 - CHS Media Room - 6:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michele E. Flynn
School Board Administrative Assistant