

SOUTHINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SOUTHINGTON, CONNECTICUT  
REGULAR MEETING  
November 15, 2012

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The regular meeting of the Southington Board of Education was held on Thursday, November 15, 2012 at 7:30 p.m. at the Municipal Center in the Public Assembly Room located at 200 North Main Street, Southington, Connecticut.

1. BOARD RECOGNITIONS

The Celebration of Excellence was held from 7:10 p.m. through 7:15 p.m. in honor of Allan Borghesi, Chairman, and Marc Borghesi, Project Manager, from Borghesi Building and Engineering Co., Inc. The Borghesi Company started construction with a very old, school building and developed it into a Municipal Center that is shared by the Board of Education and Town offices. Mr. Goralski presented Mr. Allan Borghesi and Mr. Marc Borghesi with a Certificate of Excellence. Refreshments followed.

2. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. by Chairperson, Mr. Brian Goralski. Board members present were Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mrs. Patricia Johnson, Mrs. Jill Notar-Francesco, Mrs. Patricia Queen, and Mr. Zaya Oshana. Absent were Mr. David Derynoski and Mrs. Terry Lombardi.

Present from the administration were Dr. Joseph Erardi, Jr., Superintendent of Schools; Mrs. Karen Smith, Assistant Superintendent; Mrs. Sherri DiNello, Director of Business and Finance; Mr. Frederick Cox, Director of Operations, and Dr. Perri Murdica, Senior Special Education Coordinator.

Student Representatives present were Miss Whitney DiMeo and Miss Abigail Harris.

There were approximately 50 individuals in the audience.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The student representatives led the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Goralski requested a moment of silence in honor of Ms. Jane Luby who taught in Southington for over 39 years. She started at Strong Elementary School and continued at Kennedy Middle School.

Mr. Derynoski and Mrs. Lombardi were unable to attend the meeting, which was rescheduled from November 8, 2012 because of the storm. Both Board members requested that

Mr. Goralski extend their apologies for not being able to attend and each forwarded questions and statements to be addressed at the meeting in their absence. Mr. Goralski will include their statements during the Full-Day Kindergarten discussion.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: by Mrs. Notar-Francesco, seconded by Mrs. Terri Carmody:

**“Move to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of October 25, 2012.”**

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

5. COMMUNICATIONS

a. Communications from Audience

Arthur Cyr, 103 Berlin Avenue: Mr. Cyr stated that he has taken on a couple projects over the past couple years and one of those projects pertained to bus safety. He took a moment to share with the Board of Education that he is thrilled to see that a number of Southington buses that now have cameras. The second project he’s involved with brings free money to the schools. He reminded the public that they should take a moment to register their grocery store reward cards so every time they shop, they can help earn money for the schools. Mr. Cyr has already earned 1,155 points from Price Chopper and he has encouraged his friends and neighbors to register their cards as well.

Mr. Cyr stated that he was thrilled to be at the new Municipal Center and thanked Dr. Erardi for working with the town to realign the driveway of the building with Hobart Street. That is a project that Mr. Cyr brought to Dr. Erardi’s attention and they were fortunate to work together with the town to get that job done.

b. Communications from Board Members and Administration

Communication from the Board Members:

Mrs. Notar-Francesco shared a report from CREC. They had a meeting on November 14 and the council approved the formation of two committees.

Strategic Planning Committee

This committee will take an active part in reviewing the following items under the guidance of a hired consultant:

- Mission Statement ~ the council will review the mission statement which was last reviewed approximately 15 years ago.
- Roles of the Council Member ~ the committee will review the roles of Council members and the scope of their authority in relation to CREC. They will explore how they can engage Council members to be more active within the organization.
- Priorities ~ the committee will review CREC services to districts and determine if there’s anything else they could be doing.

- Bylaws ~ a review of the bylaws will begin to ensure they are still relevant and serve the needs of the Council and the organization.

### Legislative Committee

This committee will seat eight Council members and they will look to develop a legislative agenda for this upcoming session. The focus will be narrowed to 3-4 items. One initiative that came from this committee was a letter sent to the State Department of Education, OPM, and the Governor's office requesting that they coordinate a meeting to discuss the Sheff Settlement Agreement. The intent of this joint meeting is to discuss the state's plan for meeting the requirements of Sheff and to clarify what the state's expectations will be for the participation of other school districts in the Capital Region.

The legislative session begins on January 9 and ends on June 5. The Council was urged to carefully pay attention to the information surrounding the state budget. The council members were encouraged to talk to legislators about their priorities, especially as it relates to education. She mentioned that good news from the districts should be shared with the legislators.

The CREC Legislative Breakfast is scheduled for February 7, 2013 at 8:00 a.m. at the State Capital.

Mr. Oshana had two items to mention:

1. It's been a busy couple weeks for the Southington High School band. They participated in Music of the Knight in Cheshire where they put on a seamless show. Mr. Oshana was honored to hand out some of the awards that evening. Shortly after that event, they attended the National Competition at the Met Life Stadium in New Jersey where they took 7<sup>th</sup> place nationally. On Monday, they did a Veterans Day concert. It was very moving and it was amazing to see the impact of the relationship between the students, veterans, and the community. On Tuesday evening, the band had their banquet. Mr. Oshana stated that they are a great group of ambassadors for Southington. Credit goes to Mr. Shaw and Mrs. Ossias for all the work they put into this successful program.
2. In regard to snow removal, Mr. Oshana expressed his concern with the November storm. He was contacted by parents, teachers, and students who shared that their schools weren't plowed when they left their buildings that day. The walkways weren't shoveled and the driveways were plowed. This created an unsafe environment. Mr. Oshana's issue was that the Board of Education had to sign the bids in a timely manner so they could get the contractors in place so the school district would avoid situations like this. If the goal was to do that and get the subcontractors in place, the Board of Education failed. Mr. Oshana asked that the Board review who they signed the contract with, what they are doing, and how they get them to the schools throughout the day to ensure this doesn't happen again.

Dr. Erardi shared that he takes part of the responsibility for that storm. The forecast was much different than what came into the community on that day. When the

weather intensified, they were in touch with the police department and the town. Town Manager, Garry Brumback, took his entire highway department and put them on the roads of Southington. Dr. Erardi's biggest concern was the bus transportation. The cooperation from the town was enormous. The follow-through with central office in regard to the storm is as follows:

- Personal calls are made to all building-level custodians for their reflection on how the job was executed by the subcontractors. Was it done? Was it done well? Was it done poorly?
- This storm was unique and they did their absolute best in a short period of time.
- The administration allowed all students who drove to school, to get in their cars and leave, 20-minutes prior to the close of school. Their intent was to get the drivers out of the parking lot, then let the buses go, and the parent pick-up was also enormous that day.

Dr. Erardi was thrilled when he received the call that the last bus arrived safely without incident.

Mr. Cox stated that, once the high school was out, it was too late to send crews to the middle school and elementary schools. They did not want to mix parents, students, snow plows, and shoveling sidewalks at the same time. They did get through the day without incident. He doesn't know that they could have done anything differently because of the timing of the storm. They will continue to monitor what the contractors do. If a contractor is having difficulty, they make as many storm visits during the winter to be sure that it improves.

Mr. Oshana agreed that the cooperation between the town and the school system was great. The change in the decision to go further into the town roads was the right decision. Mr. Oshana requested that the administration get information to the Board that includes how quickly they expect the subcontractors to respond to the school district if the forecast is changing and the snow is building up. Dr. Erardi stated that the administration would get back to the Board with that information.

Mr. Goralski would also like to know if the complaints that were made by parents to Mr. Oshana also were reported to the administration in the buildings. He stated that the administration would be the appropriate people for parents to report to.

Mrs. Queen shared that the 2020 Vision committee is comprised of an extraordinary group of teachers who are all graduates of the administrative aspirant cohort from last year. The group is working extremely hard to share a recommendation with the Board of Education, for a vision for Southington Public Schools for 2020. All Board members received a brochure to review. Mrs. Lombardi and she are the liaisons for this committee. Their goal is to collect as much information, from as many stakeholders as possible. They've been making multiple presentations at a variety of meetings throughout the district, including PTOs. They developed a survey for both parents and students. They conducted one forum on November 12 for business owners, and a second one is scheduled on November 20 for elected officials. This group will be presenting to the Board of Education on December 13 at the regular meeting. Anyone unable to attend a forum can share their thoughts through Dr. Erardi's blog.

Mr. Goralski shared that some Board members will be attending the CABA Convention on Friday, November 16. This is part of the ongoing professional development for the Board.

The Veterans Day celebration was amazing. Mr. Goralski is very proud of Southington Schools. The staff and students have partnered in a way that everyone can learn from. The partnership between the veterans and the Southington community is genuine, and the ceremony was emotional. He thanked the administration for all they did to make this day so special.

Mr. Goralski suggested that the Legislative Breakfast be held early this year with their delegation. Some items that will be discussed pertain to the building committee and the financial aspects of their work. He would like to get the five representatives to meet with them earlier than usual, before they go to Hartford. There will be discussions about PCBs, school construction, funding, and sequestration. He asked that the Board let him know their availability via email correspondence.

#### Communication from Administration:

Before giving his report, Dr. Erardi mentioned that, because the Board of Education Meeting was postponed to November 15, he was not able to attend the ceremony for Justin Mirante, who was being recognized at the Bushnell as a Connecticut Teacher of the Year semi-finalist. Kimberly Hunt, Personnel Manager, went in place of Dr. Erardi.

Dr. Erardi received a call that afternoon informing him that Mr. Christopher Palmieri, Assistant Principal at DePaolo Middle School, was named the Connecticut Association of Schools Assistant Principal of the Year.

The Municipal Center dedication is scheduled for December 2, 2012 at 1:00 p.m. Mr. Goralski encouraged everyone to attend.

In addition, Dr. Erardi reported on the following information:

1. BOE Request: Concussion Information  
There is a continued conversation through the Board request regarding health concerns with Southington athletes. This report will continue to go before the Board through different sports. Dr. Erardi is impressed with the work from Mr. Swallow and Dr. Nissan.
2. Vision 2020  
Dr. Erardi is equally impressed with the Vision 2020 committee and their hard work and time moving this issue forward. They will share a proposed 2020 plan for Board input in December with hopes for adoption in January.

3. STEPS Partnership: Tip Hotline

Dr. Erardi spoke to the letter that was signed by Jack Daly, Police Chief, Kelly Leppard, STEPS Coordinator, and Dr. Erardi reminding families that they can anonymously report any opportunity that will allow the schools to be safe. This is complements of the STEPS program.

4. Professional Development

Dr. Erardi deferred to Mrs. Smith to share an overview of the November Professional Development Day for staff. Mrs. Smith stated that there is a continued need for staff to have exposure to technology which is why they developed a program for the middle school staff to select and participate in a variety of technology workshops in the morning session. The workshops consisted of *teachers teaching teachers*. At the elementary level, they facilitated grade-level professional development that incorporated technology and the Common Core State Standards. Teachers had the opportunity to explore websites and the session proved to be very productive for all involved. The afternoon session included a dynamic speaker, Jonathan Costa, from Education Connection and author of Digital Learning. Mr. Costa shared his vision and definition as to where we should be today with technology. There was a great deal of forward-thinking and it was a productive day

## c. Communications from Student Board Representatives

Miss Harris reported:

- Today parent-teacher conferences were held. The conferences aren't only an opportunity for parents to find out about how the students are doing in school, it gives parents a chance to 'put a face to the name' of the teachers that the students share stories about.
- Homecoming for juniors and seniors is scheduled for Friday, November 16.

Miss DiMeo reported:

- In reference to the snowstorm, Miss DiMeo was very thankful that the administration allowed the students to leave 20 minutes early. They all got out safely.
- Monday at school, much of the curriculum revolved around Veterans Day. In her psychology class, they talked about post-traumatic stress disorder which affects many veterans. It's important to put the emphasis on this because these people have done so much for the country. It's great that the district is bringing the attention to them.
- The Faculty Tea was held on November 14 by the National Honor Society at Southington High School. The students who are in National Honor Society bring tea and cookies and the faculty then come and visit. It gives the students the chance to catch-up with teachers and share some small talk. While students might be done with a specific teacher's class for the year, they still remain good friends.
- The French and Spanish exchange meeting was held that afternoon. There are 30 students participating. Twelve in Spanish and eighteen in French. They are very

excited to have such a large crowd. The exchange is taking place in April and they are excited to have this become such a big part of the school.

- The Thanksgiving Day Football game is taking place between Cheshire and Southington High Schools. They hope that Southington will have an advantage by having the new turf and they will defeat Cheshire!

## 6. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

### a. Personnel Report

MOTION: by Mrs. Clark, seconded by Mrs. Notar-Francesco:

**“Move to approve the Personnel Report, as submitted.”**

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

## 7. COMMITTEE REPORTS

### a. Curriculum and Instruction Committee Meeting ~ October 24, 2012

Mrs. Carmody shared that the committee heard a Teacher Leader presentation from Christy Michalak who is a teacher at South End Elementary School. This program would consist of having teacher leaders in the elementary schools as a possibility. It would help with the upcoming evaluation plan that will require extensive restructuring of all administrator positions. They will visit this topic during budget season.

The committee had the privilege of visiting the district preschool program and the services that are offered to the children with IEPs. They also reviewed the Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) program which is an important service provided to children who require this intensive intervention. The committee toured the classroom, the ABA resource center, and had the opportunity to talk to staff. She thanked Ms. Sally Kamerbeek, Principal at Hatton Elementary School, Dr. Perri Murdica, Senior Coordinator of Pupil Services, and Sandy Kujawski, Coordinator of Pupil Services for providing the committee with the information.

The committee discussed the SOAR program and received an overview of the program as it relates to inclusion, identification, enrichment, and communication. The OLSAT was explained as a part of the process of determining if a student is identified under state law as being gifted and talented. Other criteria for this program include creativity, task commitment, and a characteristic profile. The identification committee will complete the selection process and submit the names.

## 8. OLD BUSINESS

### a. Town Government Communications

Mr. Goralski reported the following:

1. The turf advisory committee had their first meeting. Now that turf field is done and it's called a community field, there are items that impact the Board of Education. They will need to review the policies which will also impact certain financial aspects. Both committees will need to begin researching the policies and how they apply to finances. Some of the recommendations in the design process were to generate revenue for the replacement, maintenance, and ongoing care to the complex.

Mrs. Carmody asked for clarification about the policies that need to be reviewed and developed. She asked if they are thinking about charging fees for games or field use. Mr. Goralski stated that the only sporting event they charge for is Southington High School football. There will be evening games in other sports that they will have to revisit as a Board. One of the recommendations of the advisory committee is the possibility to have \$1.00 per ticket used toward the turf replacement fund. Discussion needs to take place about ticket pricing and events. In addition, there needs to be discussion about employees overseeing restrooms and the maintenance of the field. Being a community field, they need to have a partnership and an agreement. This will change the role of some of the Board employees and the sharing of their roles with other people. This is a town and school complex and they need to be sure they align appropriately.

Mr. Goralski read a statement that he shared at the Public Building Committee and it's related to Government Communication. He shared this statement with chairman Leary and he plans to get this message to the Town Council and to all colleagues with whom the Board of Education partner. The statement read as follows:

*"I am incredibly disappointed that some elected officials are using the unfortunate situation of funding shortfalls and environmental issues with the current Middle School building project as a platform for political and/or personal gain. The project came to be through the collaborative work of all elected Boards in the town of Southington and, ultimately, the approval of the Southington voters. Given the current complications facing the project, that same collaborative effort will be needed for the project to be successful.*

*I believe all elected officials should remember that as individuals we have no power and only as a whole with our respective Boards, do we have the authority to serve our community. Furthermore, when the Boards choose to work collaboratively and communicate in a professional and respectful manner, our community needs can be met despite any obstacle that comes our way. Any individual that acts independent of their Board and communicates in their official capacity with only a select audience is undermining the position and Board they serve.*

*Finally, there is formal protocol and best practice in place for the sharing of and request for information between elected and appointed Boards. I ask that all elected officials respect these practices. Any individual that represents their personal interests or misrepresents the facts while acting in their elected capacity is doing a disservice to their position, the Board they serve on and the Southington community.*

*I look forward to open, honest and respectful dialogue between all elected Boards as we*



*tackle the difficult task of addressing the complications that face the Middle School Building Committee."*

b. Construction Update

Mr. Cox stated that the Plantsville and South End Elementary School projects are being placed at the top of the queue from the State Bureau of School Facilities in December to finally review the change orders and to make a determination on funding.

DePaolo and Kennedy Middle Schools ~ On Tuesday, the building committee approved approximately \$10 million in value engineering items to be removed from the overall project scope. Several items are still being reviewed by the architect, Newfield Construction. In regard to the environmental piece, Hygenics has not heard back from the EPA regarding their direction on PCB removal.

This project is roughly \$6-\$12 million over budget because of the environmental impact and some mistakes and miscalculations by the professionals. Two percent has always been a reasonable number to work with. The complications this time is that we went out on feasibility study and the public voted on a project. The project was a \$100 million project. However, when it went to the Board of Finance and Town Council, the community supported an \$85 million project that still got the district what they wanted.

At this point, Fletcher Thompson and Newfield Construction have attempted to explain to them why, from design to schematic, they jumped to ten percent. The Building Committee is uncomfortable with this jump in the number. The details of the items included in the \$10 million that Mr. Cox spoke to will be in the minutes from the Building Committee meeting. Mr. Goralski encourages everyone to review those minutes. At the next Building Committee meeting, they will talk about the potential for another million dollars of reductions to that plan that includes changing the cooling systems. Mr. Goralski stated that he voted 'no' to this proposal. He does not think that the Board of Education should be short-changing how they do the cooling system. Mr. Goralski shared that there is a potential for a referendum. The public supported the \$85 million, and if that is not going to give the public what they want, they might have to ask them to consider another number. However, they can't talk about the number until the experts finish their work.

Mrs. Clark shared that what is so upsetting is that the Board of Education has always been transparent and communicated openly. They have not gotten the answers to all their questions. They are looking at a shortfall between \$6-\$12 million for the environmental concerns. She thinks that open communication is a must. As soon as the Board of Education gets the information, they will share that information with the public.

Dr. Erardi stated that, this week, they met with the faculty at DePaolo and Kennedy Middle Schools to ensure them that their environment is safe and that accurate information is available and they want to be the source of that information.

It was determined that the two-year project is now a three-year project. It's his belief that DEP will act and make a decision on the \$9 million vapor issue over the next week or two. He recommends that they invite the architect and construction management firm to their December

meeting so the Board of Education can speak to them directly. This could be helpful in obtaining a timeline and an update to the questions that Board members have.

Mrs. Johnson asked why they would stay with this company and, if they chose to leave that company, would there be penalties. Mr. Goralski shared that Attorney Sciota has attended all Building Committee meetings and he is aware of all legal ramifications of the contract. Mr. Goralski does not believe that they discussed *not* using the company. If they were to switch companies, there could be contractual ramifications and this would bring them back to step one. They would have to redesign everything and would lose another year. Mr. Goralski will ask that Attorney Sciota clarify the responsibilities and penalties involved.

Mrs. Johnson thought that it might be a good idea to invite the state legislators to discuss with them what help they could get from the state. She recommended that they pose the question and allow them the opportunity to research the situation and bring to us their answers. Mrs. Clark stated that it's a federal issue and it's very controversial. It's been discussed that they talk to the legislators; however, it's important that they act on this now and not wait for help from the state leaders. Mr. Goralski stated that this is another reason to hold the legislator meeting sooner than later.

Mr. Oshana is bothered by the fact that the professionals didn't know. He feels that they were not served appropriately. When you look at value engineering, it means you are eliminating items from a plan. He disagrees with doing this and supports a 'no' vote. The town was sold and voted on two schools at the price of \$85 million for the items identified. If you begin removing items, it's not what was sold to the public.

Mrs. Clark did agree that they should have known that there would be PCBs in the building. They did know that. However, if you take both buildings, one has minimal and the other has so much more. It all depends on the products and materials they used at each site. They did have a small contingency for PCB removal as they do for other items. They did six tests and the results came back showing minimal levels. Mr. Goralski acknowledged that there is a lot of work to get through, and he will get back to the Board on the penalties and consequences.

## 9. NEW BUSINESS

### a. Ratification of SEA Contract

MOTION: by Mrs. Notar-Francesco, seconded by Mrs. Queen:

**“Move to approve the agreement between the Southington Education Association and the Southington Board of Education.”**

Mrs. Notar-Francesco commented that this was a respectful process and she was appreciative of the amount of give-and-take on both sides. She thanked the staff who worked on this agreement for working through some of the issues.

Mr. Oshana agreed and said this partnership was tremendous. There was open communication and dialogue. It was a great building point moving forward. He recognized the

work on behalf of Sherri DiNello, Dr. Erardi, the Committee, and the SEA committee for their hard work.

Mr. Goralski thanked Mr. Brown for being in the audience for the vote. Dr. Erardi stated that, if the vote was a positive vote to support the ratification, the document would then be forwarded to the Commissioner of Education and to the Town Clerk. The Town Council would then have a 30-day window to refuse the document. If there is no action taken, the document will move forward as a final draft document. He also recognized Sherri DiNello and Attorney Richard Mills who are a dynamic team to his office and the School Board. He also extended his appreciation to Mr. Bob Brown, SEA President, for his dedication to this partnership.

Mrs. Queen also recognized Sherri DiNello. She appreciated that Mrs. DiNello makes complicated materials easy and that she is endlessly patient. Mrs. Queen learned a lot by working with her.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YES – Mrs. Clark, Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Notar-Francesco, Mr. Oshana, Mrs. Queen, Mrs. Carmody, and Mr. Goralski. Motion carried unanimously.

b. Policy #3324, Preferential Bidding Procedure ~ Second Reading

MOTION: by Mrs. Clark, seconded by Mrs. Carmody:

**“Move to accept the recommendation from the Policy and Personnel Committee and approve the Preferential Bidding Procedures policy, as presented.”**

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

c. All-Day Kindergarten Proposal

Dr. Erardi distributed copies of the PowerPoint that was being presented that evening by Karen Smith and Sherri DiNello. He explained that they would hear about instruction and cost, and he explained that the intent of the presentation was to share information. He did not expect that the Board would be making a decision that evening. Mrs. Smith and Mrs. DiNello presented their information surrounding an All-Day Kindergarten program in Southington.

Dr. Erardi thanked the administration for their presentation. He thought it important that the School Board know that this is an endorsement that is presented to them in a unanimous way from the central office administration, all elementary school principals, all kindergarten instructors, and every committee member that was identified in the presentation. This is an opportunity to move the program from good to great. It’s an opportunity that he believes is not an ‘if,’ but a ‘when’. In both forums, approximately ninety-percent of the audience were in support of the program. He explained that this is a very respectful conversation about different opinions. They believe that no one knows the child better than the parents. This proposal will recognize individual conversations that parents may have with building principals about their child attending a full-day program. This was an informational presentation and there will be a continued conversation in December and January.

Mr. Goralski explained that both Mr. Derynoski and Mrs. Lombardi presented him with questions and statements that he will address at the end of the conversation.

Mrs. Clark appreciated that Mrs. DiNello was very detailed when providing a list of items needed in the classrooms. She commended the committee for their work that was accomplished to this point.

Mrs. Notar-Francesco asked for additional information about the breakdown of time. She asked what the school day looks like now and what students would be missing without a full-day program. Mrs. Smith explained that students would miss the depth of experience and the types of differentiated experiences throughout the day. Without a full-day, students are provided with information at the start of their day when they sit for calendar time and discuss the objectives for the day. Students currently have a working snack, some time for the music, art, and physical education. They start and end math and language arts lessons. The time flies by and there is not any time for recess or differentiation of learning. Students and teachers are rushed.

With a full-day program, students will be offered mini-lessons. They will learn something in the early part of the day that will be revisited throughout the day and incorporated in other subject areas. Teachers will have the opportunity to go deeper. That is what the CCSS asks districts to do. They actually have fewer learner objectives; however, there are more requirements for each objective for mastery. More time is required to go deeper into the objectives they have. Kindergarten teachers explained that language arts is not a block of time; it's an experience that should be integrated throughout the day.

They are not adding to the curriculum. Teachers are finding that they have a requirement, as an educator, to expose their students, and to have their students master objectives in a 2.5 hour day now. It's a whirlwind experience and there is not time to individualize the way the teachers want to.

Mrs. Notar-Francesco asked if they are looking for higher test scores as a result of this and Mrs. Smith responded that they are not. They are looking for better adjusted children who are going to enter first grade with better readiness skills for learning.

Mr. Oshana asked about the integration the CCSS in all subjects throughout the day. He asked how they are currently written, how they are integrated, and what's written for full-day kindergarten. Mrs. Smith explained that the current curriculum is written for a full-day kindergarten program. She and other administrators have been attending multiple workshops surrounding the common core state standards. They meet with many colleagues who are all stating that the amount of pressure on our youngest learners in order to accomplish the learner objectives in a kindergarten day is tremendous.

Mr. Oshana asked about families who would prefer to have their child attend a half-day program instead of the full day and how that would work. Mrs. Smith shared that she spoke with other districts who explained that there are very few who attend a partial-day program. Of those who do, it's more common in those with an IEP. Mr. Oshana wondered how the district would adjust their teaching for students who attend the partial day. Mrs. Smith explained that, in most cases, all students will have the exposure to the subject areas, but the depth of the experience will require the full day.

It was stated in the presentation that there will be a need for nine classrooms in the district and Mr. Oshana asked for clarification as to how this would not impact the art, music, and community rooms. Dr. Erardi stated that, as the district continues to decline in enrollment, they have vacant classrooms. Mrs. Notar-Francesco asked what happens when we look ahead to a growing enrollment. Dr. Erardi shared that their projected long-term longitudinal does not show an increase. They will continue to be where they are over the next ten years. In all schools, they still have a community room that is easily transferrable to a classroom. He does not believe that this proposal would compromise art, music, and physical education for the next ten years.

Mrs. Queen wondered if there are families who don't send their child to kindergarten when they reach the age because they feel they simply aren't ready for that program. Mrs. Smith stated that there are parents who make this decision, but it is very rare.

Mr. Goralski stated that all Mr. Derynoski's questioned were addressed and he looks forward to continuing the dialogue. Mrs. Lombardi wanted to thank everyone and she was extremely disappointed that she couldn't be there. In her letter, she expressed her heartfelt thanks to the parents who reached out with their opinions, positions, and research. Their active participation, advocacy, and passion are admirable. Given that there is no conclusive research supporting for or against full-day kindergarten, her input is through her own experience in tutoring. She feels that there is not enough time for students or the teacher. The current curriculum does not match the current available instructional time. Her questions were answered by the presentation and Mr. Goralski is entering her statement in its entirety into the record (Attachment A).

Mr. Goralski struggles to see how this will not heighten his expectation of student performance. If they get a rushed experience now, why should he not have a higher performance expectation in Grade 1? He would like to see academic gain in year one and asked why he wouldn't see that gain. Mrs. Smith stated that he should see that gain if the students are ready. He believes that by their having a full year of socialization, curriculum, and engagement he expects an improvement in Grade 1. Mrs. Smith stated that he should expect improvement and also because of the opportunities to individualize for intervention needs. They believe that every child should have a form of an IEP. That individuality will better prepare the students at their own readiness level. Students should be able to show growth against themselves. They are looking to reduce the number of students who are strugglers and not ready for the learning experiences in Grade 1.

Dr. Erardi stated that, if the school board supports the all-day kindergarten proposal, there would be two ongoing issues in regard to reporting back to the BOE. First is the qualitative which is just as important as performance. This piece is the conversation that the administration will be having with the parents as they go through their kindergarten experience with their child. School Board members on C&I witnessed a new advisor/advisee program that is all about the child becoming a relaxed, better learner in the middle school and high school. That is equally important. Does the child have a love for learning moving forward because it's a relaxed more appropriate atmosphere?

Second, they will do the quantitative study and will review the performance and will bring the information back to the School Board.

Mr. Goralski asked that the administration provide him with the following information. He would like it explained to the Board how this could improve the reading and writing scores on CMTs. He wants to see the literacy scores move up.

Mrs. Notar-Francesco would appreciate the same information. She believes that they need to see the numbers that will indicate why they need to do this. It would be helpful for her to have information from other districts within our DRG. Mrs. Smith agrees and will start by showing the data from last year with the extended kindergarten students as the year goes on. She will also gather data from other districts within our DRG.

Mrs. Clark believes that testing is not all about numbers and scores. It's about the child being able to sit in a circle, listen, play, or use scissors. Can the teacher take the time to help the child move to the next level? From experience, 2.5 hours is not enough time to get children the basic skills they need. She cannot imagine how teachers can differentiate for each child and how they can measure that. She asks where there's a test score that measures how a teacher brings a student from a reading level one to a reading level three. She believes that these students are little people and you cannot measure that type of learning.

Mrs. Queen shared that she had two goals for her children as they went through school: she wanted them to have a love for learning and a love for school. She thought that would be the foundation that would carry them forward year after year. In terms of assessment, she wondered how they can measure love of learning / love of school. Do they see an overall attitude shift in their students? She sees this as the most important outcome of moving to the full-day program. She also asked about naptime for students. How would that be handled? Mrs. Smith stated that the assumption on the part of the committee is that they will assess the students within a week. It will not take them long to know which students need more quiet time and those students will be provided with that experience. Mrs. Smith stated that they will also be considerate of transportation to and from kindergarten.

Mrs. Notar-Francesco wondered, based on the timeline, when the administration would begin planning the curriculum for this program. Mrs. Smith explained that, when the Board agrees with the philosophy of the program, they would be ready to move ahead and put on paper what a typical day will look like at each individual school. If the Board endorses the program in January, they will reconvene and continue to work to ensure the program is ready for August.

Mr. Goralski shared that Mrs. Lombardi asked how the student success will be measured and what the plan will be for professional development to expand learning beyond the blocks of time. Mrs. Smith shared that teachers are already thinking about how they can use their own creativity to expand the learning. Professional development will include learning from one another. Dr. Erardi concluded by stating that it's the administration's belief that an all-day kindergarten program is not half the work for a kindergarten teacher, but it's more work for a kindergarten teacher.

MOTION: by Mr. Oshana, seconded by Mrs. Queen:

“Move to adjourn.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Michelle Passamano*

Recording Secretary

Southington Board of Education

## Full Day Kindergarten: Comments and Questions from Terry Lombardi

Tonight's meeting is one that I cannot attend due to a previously scheduled out of state family commitment. With the rescheduling of last week's BOE meeting to tonight, I am not able to be there to personally express my comments and questions on the Full Day Kindergarten. Consequently, I've asked our Chairman, Brian Goralski to share them with you.

Heartfelt thanks are in order to the parents who reached out to share their opinions, positions and research. Your active participation, advocacy and passion expressed publicly and privately is admirable. The research received from Mrs. Karen Smith and Mrs. Frechette was appreciated.

Given that there is no conclusive research supporting reasons for or against Full Day Kindergarten, my input to the conversation is two years of tutoring in many of Southington's kindergarten classes. I draw from my experience tutoring on the current language arts curriculum and my observations of our kindergarten students and teachers rushing throughout the day due to time constraints.

My conclusions based on my tutorial experience and observations are three fold:

First, there is not enough TIME for the student NOR for the teacher. *The current curriculum does not match the current available instruction time.* Please note that I am referring to the CURRENT curriculum-not what is coming down the pike, Common Core Standards.

Secondly, minimal time is spent on structured social and motor skill development.

Lastly, many of our kindergarten students do not reach the Reading Level 4 Goal by the end Kindergarten.

### Questions

The following questions I raise for the Administration based on the presentation outlining the proposal.

1. Please describe what a typical Full Day Kindergarten schedule might look like.
2. What would the half day option look like for those students receiving exceptions? What would they miss? (Recommendation slide: last bullet)
3. How will FDK success be measured?
4. What professional development is planned, if any, for all future FDK teachers?
5. Financial Impact:
  - a. Certified Staff slide Enrollment shift/staff reductions in K-5: What impact will this have on class sizes K-5 across the district?
  - b. Classroom Furniture/fixtures/equipment
    - i. Please develop a scenario whereby we could reuse furniture and material from classrooms vacated from the reassigned staff/empty classrooms
    - ii. Couldn't we have some of these fixtures/furniture/supplies donated by organizations or the SEF (like what Farmington is considering)?

I look forward to all the input and dialogue from tonight's meeting.

Sincerely,

Terry Lombardi