

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
RETREAT MEETING MINUTES
June 23, 2014**

The meeting of the West Windsor-Plainsboro Board of Education was called to order by President Anthony Fleres at 6:02 p.m. in Grover Middle School's media center. The following board members were present:

Ms. Rachelle Feldman Hurwitz	Ms. Rachel Juliana	Ms. Dana Krug
Mr. Anthony Fleres	Ms. Michele Kaish	Mr. Scott Powell
Ms. Louisa Ho	Mr. Richard Kaye	Mr. Yu "Taylor" Zhong

Present also were: Dr. David Aderhold, Superintendent; Mr. Larry Shanok, Assistant Superintendent for Finance/Board Secretary; Mr. Martin Smith, Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum & Instruction; and Mr. Gerard Dalton, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Services/Planning.

CONVENE

In accordance with the State's Sunshine Law, adequate notice of this meeting was provided by mailing a notice of the time, date, location and, to the extent known, the agenda of this meeting to the PRINCETON PACKET, THE TIMES, THE TRENTONIAN, THE HOME NEWS TRIBUNE, AND WEST WINDSOR and PLAINSBORO PUBLIC LIBRARIES. Copies of the notice have also been posted in the board office and filed with Plainsboro's and West Windsor's township clerks and in each of the district schools.

No members of the public were present.

BOARD PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

Mr. Fleres welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their participation. He commented that the main purpose of this retreat is to brief the Board on the educational direction of the administrative team so that administration will have clarity and alignment between the Board and administrative staff about the goals for the 2014-2015 school year.

SUPERINTENDENT'S COMMENTS

Dr. Aderhold also welcomed the Board to the retreat. By the end of the evening, with the Board providing feedback, Dr. Aderhold noted that these clarifications will help set the direction for this coming year. As an outcome of the retreat, Board Members will have a better understanding of the goals and the tasks associated with them; and, the administrative team will have clear direction and understanding of the Board's priorities.

He noted that the goals discussed tonight have taken Board of Education input into account, but in some cases the feedback may be more appropriate for utilization in board committees and in future retreats. Tonight the focus is on goals and tasks.

DISCUSSION

The Superintendent described the "maker" movement that is motivating many children to create; while it is found under a variety of names, invention and creativity is common to them all. A TED talk by Ayah Bdeir, an interactive artist, engineer, and founder/CEO of littleBits, an open source library of modular electronics that snap together with magnets, brought the subject to life; and, the Board of Education breaking up into two teams allowed the members to experience the process themselves.

Common Core. Martin Smith gave a Common Core Overview. He made clear the distinction between the standards movement which has been growing since the 1980's and the assessment movement which has gained momentum in recent years. NCLB tied assessments to standards. At this time 45 states and the District of Columbia are part of the Common Core effort. PARCC, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers is an assessment option, has 13 states and the District of Columbia participating at this time.

Recently, the State of New Jersey and the district participated in a field trial of PARCC. The district's effort went well, but the entire field trial demonstrated that much detail remains to be determined in order to have a successful assessment effort next year. Unfortunately, the State of New Jersey is slow in reaching key decisions; this slowness will make advanced planning difficult.

Beliefs About Learning. Mr. Dalton led the Board of Education in a discussion of the article: Beliefs about Learning and Their Implications for Teaching and Learning. Utilizing the 4A's protocol, the group engaged in the process: silent reading of article, writing notes in answer to the following questions: what assumptions does the author hold? What do you agree with in the text? What do you want to argue with?

Three groups of Board Members engaged in the process. Wide ranging points were elicited. Ending the session with an open discussion let all members share ideas. Administrators stated that this article was successfully used in discussion with other district staff members.

District Goals 2014-2015. Dr. Aderhold reviewed the strategic goals and tasks associated with the goals for 2014-2015. Having separated the Board into three groups, as a first round the groups rotated through the three goals/tasks; the focus was on asking probing and clarifying questions to facilitate understanding among board and administrators of the tasks.

As a second round, the Board Members focused on measurable indicators associated with a task. Indications of whether the Board Members found the indicator a reasonable indicator for the task or whether there was an "off-base" element to the indicator. Questions were encouraged again to facilitate understanding. While most indicators received a "go" from the Board Members, the "off-base" indicators and notes will be studied to improve the document. The administrators will meet and integrate tonight's input into the process. The result will be shared again with Board Members at committee meetings as the 2014-2015 goals/tasks/measurable indicators are formulated.

Next Steps/Close. Feedback was encouraged. Board members sought better communication across committee members in the coming year. It was noted that there is a need to ask clarifying questions throughout the year whether one is a new member or an experienced one viewing an issue from a new perspective. The compound/complex nature of some indicators was noted. A desire for some of the tasks and indicators to give greater recognition to the multi-year flavor of several of the tasks and indicators was voiced. It was urged that where possible, information be shared in advance of retreats so that time can be spent familiarizing oneself with the material.

Superintendent Aderhold and Board President Fleres thanked everyone for their participation.

Upon motion by Mr. Kaye, seconded by Ms. Kaish, and by unanimous voice vote of all present, the meeting adjourned at 10:08 p.m.

Larry Shanok, Board Secretary