

GOUVERNEUR CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
 BOARD OF EDUCATION
 GOUVERNEUR NEW YORK 13642
 REGULAR BOARD MEETING

March 5, 2018

I. CALL TO ORDER

The REGULAR MEETING of the Board of Education of Gouverneur Central School District was called to order by President Ed Siebels, at 6:30 P.M., EDT in the High School Auditorium, leading those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Trustees Present: Dr. William Cartwright, James Delity, Lisa Dunkelberg, David Fenlong, Karen Geer, Lisa McGregor, Nickolas Ormasen, Roland Roderick, Ed Siebels.

Also Present: Myia Tyler, Student Board Representative; Lauren French, Superintendent of Schools; Donna Runner, Assistant Superintendent; Carol LaSala, Business Manager; Cory Wood, High School Principal; Steven Coffin, Middle School Principal; Charity Zawatski, Elementary Principal; Robyn Knowlton, CSE/CPSE Chairperson; Harold Simmons, Director of Facilities; Tatia Z. Kennedy, District Clerk.

News Media: Jessyca Cardinell, Gouverneur Tribune Press.

II. DISCUSSION

A. Presentations

1. Odyssey of the Mind

Stephanie Plaisted, OM Advisor, first thanked the Board, saying we are one of only two schools who still have teams in our local area. Gouverneur hosts 3 teams, including two primary teams. The Division 1 (intermediate) team, consisting of Kacey Collette, Teigan Woodward, Hailey Trimm, Toni Ludlow, and Lilah Siebels, and coached by Beth Siebels, presented "Rest Stop in Space: A Stellar Hangout" to applause from those present. Ms. Plaisted announced that the scores came out today, and this team scored 3rd place, describing there are 3 parts to the score: performance, style, and spontaneous. She announced to the team that they scored highest of everybody in regions 8 and 9 on performance.

2. Staff Recognition Awards

Brooke Santamont, GTA co-President, represented the District's Shared Decision-Making Committee to present staff recognition awards for 2017-2018 to Ms. Gina Taylor, teacher; and Ms. Tatia Kennedy, secretary. The commendations read, in part, "*Mrs. Taylor has gone above and beyond her duties as a 5th grade math teacher. Upon hearing of a personal tragedy involving a student, she personally went out and bought a new backpack and necessary school supplies. This was so she would be set up for success upon her return to school... Mrs. Taylor knew that my daughter had a lot of anxiety due to the traumatic situation that just happened, and she allowed my daughter and a couple of her friends a quiet place in her room to eat lunch away from the busy cafeteria. This was during her free time that she allowed this. Mrs. Taylor makes math enjoyable and fun to learn.*" "*Tatia comes to work every single day to support every aspect of the District, our students, employees and members of the BOE... She continues to grow and improve professionally by attending workshops and training sessions so that she understands topics associated with maintaining an employment pool of over 300 people... Tatia also reaches out to our students. She is welcoming in the office to everyone who stops in with concerns and complaints. She runs the frontline of defense for every call that comes in and can usually triage every call to direct the person to the best resource. We are so fortunate to have Tatia here every single day.*"

B. Administrative Updates

1. Principals

Elementary principal Charity Zawatski elaborated a bit more on the OM competition that she judged, and also congratulated the Odyssey of the Mind teams, recognizing Rebecca Hocking, Jessica McMaster, and Chandler Roberts for volunteering and elementary coaches Laura Spicer and Shawn Poole. She also relayed events taking place for this month's focus on Reading. Mr. Coffin and Mr. Wood reported on debriefing sessions held for students and staff at the Middle and High schools to review the events that occurred during the March 1 threat. Students had many good questions and they felt the sessions had been very beneficial.

March 5, 2018

II. DISCUSSION (Continued)

B. Administrative Updates (Cont.)

President Ed Siebels spoke, saying, "Last week was a very trying time for our community as a whole, and this school being the center of our community. I want to publicly thank and commend the district, staff, and administrators for how they handled this unfortunate event. I can't imagine how difficult it must have been to take care of 850 children and control the safety of every student. I want to say thank you for what everybody did. I'm sure decisions had to be made on the fly, not everything went perfect, but in the end what was perfect was everybody was home safe and everybody came back today." President Siebels also thanked the community for being so understanding in the challenging situation.

2. Facilities

Facilities Director Harold Simmons reported that the few contractors left working in the new Middle School are scheduled to be done in April, and over February break contractors completed many punch list items at the Elementary school.

3. Student Board Representative

Myia Tyler stated that due to the cancellations the previous week, the Amazing Race had only one day of competition and the remaining 9 teams will finish this week, saying it has been fun and challenging for all teams. She noted that the cancelled Red Cross blood drive from Friday has been rescheduled to May 1.

III. COMMENT PERIOD

President Ed Siebels opened the floor for public comment. Most of the comments pertained to the incident on March 1, 2018 concerning a threat made in the Gouverneur High School which led to the school district putting the students on lockdown followed by dismissing all students.

Investigation. Responding to questions directly related to the investigation, Superintendent Lauren F. French stated, "This is an ongoing active investigation. I am letting police field all of those questions. This was an active crime scene. They have different persons of interest; cell phones have been taken and removed for evaluation. Video footage has been turned over to the police."

Procedures. Superintendent French, in response to a question from parent Jessica Bice, stated that some of the strategies employed that day will change; they are constantly working toward improvement. Following the event her team spent two hours debriefing that day, and she spent three hours the next day, a snowday, with the police going over everything that had been done with each side giving the other feedback. Mrs. French shared one improvement will be to have an identified command center. In terms of cell phones, she recently learned at a Superintendent's conference in Albany, represented by the FBI and homeland security, that there are no standard guidelines and it depends on the situation. President Ed Siebels added that it is important to realize not every situation is the same and might dictate different responses. Carol Ormasen and Gina Johnson questioned the safety and security of students being sheltered in the auditorium. Mrs. French responded that the auditorium had been searched and staff was on hand for the students.

Communication. Parent Tara Richards complained that her daughter was initially told it was a drill. Mrs. French said to her knowledge it was not ever referred to as a drill, but noted she would work privately with the administrators to speak to specific teachers. Further complaints were raised about the timeliness of the message alerts parents received. Mrs. French explained that the person running the emergency alert could not always find her, and one action already implemented was to set up an emergency alert group over their cell phones and keep the entire group updated, including the person who runs the emergency alert messages. Mrs. French proceeded to explain how the emergency alert system works and why voice calls take longer to spool and send versus texts which are instantaneous.

Dismissal. Bus driver Judy Nichols brought up the confusion with the buses whether students were to go to their emergency location or not. Business Manager Carol LaSala responded that she will schedule a debriefing with First Student immediately. It was also stated that there was confusion at the community center sign-out table. Parent Adrian Cox questioned why some parents were allowed to pick up their kids during an emergency lockdown, contrary to protocol. Parent and teacher Erin Gates added her concern with the discrepancy that students at the Elementary were allowed to be picked up, while students in the Jr-Sr High School were not. Mrs. French thanked them for bringing that up and responded that it is an issue that will be addressed.

Looking ahead. Judy Nichols requested parental input on the safety committee. Mrs. French clarified that parents did serve on the committee when the safety plan was originally set up, and contributed to a certain level, but the higher security measures are not shared with any members of the public. Discussion ensued about metal detectors. Many in the audience indicated they would be willing to pay higher taxes to implement additional safety measures. Students in the audience also asked about whether they would be allowed to do a walk-out in protest, with student board representative Myia Tyler stating that she has already begun the conversation with Mr. Wood and they are working on it. Superintendent Lauren F. French added that alternatives are also being discussed, such as 17 random acts of kindness and other ideas to show support to the students in Florida.

III. COMMENT PERIOD (Continued)

Youth Sports. Dustin Carrier, Gouverneur Soccer Club, addressed the Board regarding the summer youth program and collaborating with the school to make both the summer program and school program stronger. Laura Spicer, who coaches an indoor soccer team, expressed frustration about the difficulty to use the school's facilities for her young teams due to the request for liability insurance. Business Manager Carol LaSala stated she would look into that. Mr. Carrier requested establishing a forum with the school coaches to work with them on what specific skills the youth program can work to develop in the young players.

IV. FINANCIAL REPORT

A. Budget Discussion

Business Manager Carol LaSala shared the BOCES Initial Commitment form, and informed those present that the estimated cost has come down slightly. She explained how some of the line items have been reclassified but there really aren't any changes in services. She continued to answer questions on the format of the report, and stated that final numbers should be available for the next meeting. In response to Trustee Dr. Cartwright, Superintendent French said that the possibility of hiring a school resource officer through BOCES would be discussed at her next superintendents' meeting.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - none

VI. CONSENT AGENDA

President Ed Siebels asked if any member on the Board wished to have any item on the Consent Agenda removed for special consideration and discussion. No member asked that any items be removed.

Motion to approve Consent Agenda Items:

Upon presentation and recommendation of Lauren F. French, Superintendent of Schools, motion made by Trustee Lisa Dunkelberg, seconded by Trustee Roland Roderick, that the Board of Education take the following action:

A. Minutes

Approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of February 12, 2018, as presented.

B. Claims Auditors Reports

(See Sheet #1, Board Minutes File Folder)

Approve the Claims Auditor's Reports for the period 2/3/18 - 2/23/18, as presented.

C. CSE Business

(See Sheet #2, Board Minutes File Folder)

Approve the services, including additions, modifications and deletions, for the following classified students, as reflected in the attached CSE Meeting Minutes report:

CSE Student ID#:

0011295	5103015	5103224	5103154	5102519	5103448
5100775	5100271	0010688	5102913	5102914	5102945
5103560	5100299	5103294	5103295	0010750	0011932
5100293	5103305	5102036	5100780	5100919	0011228
0011318	0014080	5103416	0010117	5101212	5101175
5103495	5102024	5102187	5102202	5102310	5102522

D. CPSE Business

(See Sheet #3, Board Minutes File Folder)

Approve the services, including additions, modifications and deletions, for the following classified students, as reflected in the attached CPSE Meeting Minutes report:

CPSE Student ID#:

5103097 5103552

E. Treasurer's Report for January 2018

(See Sheet #4, Board Minutes File Folder)

Accept the Treasurer's Report for the month of January 2018, as presented.

Vote on Consent Agenda Items:

YEAS: All Trustees Present NAYS: None.

MOTION CARRIED. ITEMS ON CONSENT AGENDA, APPROVED AS PRESENTED.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Student Board Member - discussion

President Ed Siebels explained that per education law, a district may offer voters this option once every two years, adding that he thinks it has been helpful to have the student input. Board members unanimously agreed to add a proposition to the ballot on May 15 to offer the voters a referendum to allow a student from the high school to continue to sit on the School Board.

B. Creation of Professional Development Payroll Code

Upon presentation and recommendation of Lauren F. French, Superintendent of Schools, motion made by Trustee Lisa Dunkelberg, and seconded by Trustee Roland Roderick, that the Board of Education approve the request from the Office of Curriculum and Instruction to create a Professional Development Payroll Code to compensate Teaching Assistants and Teacher Aides at the rate of prevailing minimum wage for their attendance at Professional Development activities outside of the regular work day, effective 7/1/17.

DISCUSSION: Assistant Superintendent Donna Runner explained that there didn't used to be any professional development offered outside of the school day for teacher aides and teaching assistants, but now there are many new opportunities for that staff and we need to compensate them for their time.

YEAS: All Trustees Present NAYS: None.

MOTION CARRIED. CREATION OF PD PAYROLL CODE, APPROVED AS PRESENTED.

C. Emergency Debriefing - discussion

Superintendent French told Board members that they have priced metal detectors in the range of \$5,000 - \$10,000 each. School Resource Officers (SROs) have been discussed at the BOCES level as a purchased service. She asked Board members to keep in mind that we have three campus locations, and whether effectiveness would warrant three persons versus one. Trustee Nickolas Ormasen offered another consideration, a partnership with the Gouverneur Police Department, who are already on campus frequently for both emergency and non-emergency visits. Trustee Dr. Cartwright asked if metal detectors could be a BOCES purchase as well, with Business Manager LaSala responding she did not think so but there is other special aid for that. Discussion ensued about metal detectors, who would staff them and what authority would they have, and how many detectors would be needed campus wide. Superintendent French also addressed the communication issue, with Trustee David Fenlong suggesting a crisis main communication number for parents and others calling in. Codes were discussed, with Superintendent French saying her recent training said to move away from codes and create greater clarity in the messages sent out. Mrs. French also reiterated that the community center was chosen for walkers, due to the heated environment, bathrooms, and controlled access. Police were there, as well as our own attendance clerks, nurses, guidance counselors, administrators, and the social worker. She has also been in contact with the fire department. If the weather had been inclement Mrs. French stated accommodations would have been made to get all children, including walkers, home by bus.

VIII. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. Creation of Positions1. Non-Instructional

Two (2) 1.0-FTE Cleaners. Upon presentation and recommendation of Lauren F. French, Superintendent of Schools, motion made by Trustee Lisa McGregor, and seconded by Trustee Roland Roderick, that the Board of Education approve the recommendation to create two (2) 1.0FTE Cleaner positions represented by the Gouverneur School Related Personnel Union, effective April 2, 2018.

DISCUSSION: Superintendent French confirmed that these positions are due to the opening of new Middle school.

YEAS: All Trustees Present NAYS: None.

MOTION CARRIED. CREATION OF TWO (2) 1.0-FTE CLEANER POSITIONS, APPROVED.

B. Appointments1. Instructional

Mary-Elizabeth Foote. Upon presentation and recommendation of Lauren F. French, Superintendent of Schools, motion made by Trustee Lisa McGregor, and seconded by Trustee Roland Roderick, that the Board of Education appoint Mary-Elizabeth Foote, possessing an Agriculture CTE Transitional A Certificate, to a four-year probationary term as an Agriculture Teacher, in the *Agriculture Vocational Education* special subject tenure area, at an annual salary in accordance with the Gouverneur

VIII. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT (Continued)

B. Appointments – Mary-Elizabeth Foote (Cont.)

Teachers' Association Agreement, at Step 5, BS from the current salary schedule. The probationary period is effective February 16, 2018 through February 15, 2022 (unless extended in accordance with the law). This expiration date is tentative and conditional only. Except to the extent required by the applicable provisions of Section 3012-3 of the Education Law, in order to be granted tenure the teacher must receive composite or overall annual professional performance review ratings pursuant to Section 3012-d and/or 3012-3 of the Education Law of either effective or highly effective in at least three (3) of the four (4) preceding years, and if the teacher receives an ineffective composite or overall rating in the final year of the probationary period the teacher shall not be eligible for tenure at that time.

YEAS: All Trustees Present NAYS: None.

MOTION CARRIED. APPOINTMENT OF MARY-ELIZABETH FOOTE AS AGRICULTURE TEACHER, APPROVED.

C. Leaves1. Leave Replacement Appointments

Lindsey Carvel. Upon presentation and recommendation of Lauren F. French, Superintendent of Schools, motion made by Trustee Lisa Dunkelberg, and seconded by Trustee Karen Geer, that the Board of Education extend the appointment of certified substitute Lindsey Carvel until further notice, at the established certified rate of 25+ days, pending the probationary appointment of permanent teacher.

YEAS: All Trustees Present NAYS: None.

MOTION CARRIED. APPOINTMENT OF LINDSEY CARVEL EXTENDED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE, APPROVED.

Matthew Miller. Upon presentation and recommendation of Lauren F. French, Superintendent of Schools, motion made by Trustee Lisa McGregor, and seconded by Trustee Lisa Dunkelberg, that the Board of Education appoint substitute Matthew Miller as a long-term substitute for a vacant position, at the established certified rate of 25+ days, for the period March 1, 2018 – June 22, 2018. Mr. Miller holds initial certification in Social Studies 7-12.

YEAS: All Trustees Present NAYS: None.

MOTION CARRIED. APPOINTMENT OF MATTHEW MILLER AS LONG-TERM SUB, APPROVED.

IX. COMMENT PERIOD

Cameras. Superintendent French confirmed audience questions that cameras are always on and working.

Intercom. Student Josh Gray reported that the students in the band room did not hear the announcement for evacuation. Mrs. French stated that has been addressed in the capital project and will be corrected.

Resource officers. The question arose whether it was an option to have more than one resource officer. President Ed Siebels stated that is part of the discussion and is up to what the community wants. Responding to how fast it will happen, Superintendent French said it is part of the budget process and would need to be decided prior to May in order to be part of the vote. Regarding the type of person who would be hired as an SRO, Mrs. French said it depends on the school, adding she has seen a variety including retired law enforcement and current local officers.

Looking ahead. Pam Stevens spoke, "I hate what happened, but all students realize how serious this is. I'm grateful this wasn't the real deal, we have been able to come together tonight and talk about what we can do to move forward. As a parent, gossiping on Facebook and saying things that aren't true is so frustrating, we can't fix it all, it starts in homes, starts everywhere, we need to come up with some solutions." Parent Tonya House-Carter asked what the next step would be as a community to get on board and support the school. President Siebels replied that the community would have to support the additional items added to the budget, and then approve it by a super majority since it would be over the tax cap. Tina French stood and thanked the Board and Mrs. French for being responsive, saying she appreciates the explanations and learned that the local police do have a presence in our buildings, and supports increasing taxes to get an additional social worker and school resource officers.

X. PROPOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion made by Trustee Lisa Dunkelberg, and seconded by Trustee Lisa McGregor, to enter into executive session to discuss the employment history of a particular person.

YEAS: All Trustees Present NAYS: None.

MOTION CARRIED. EXECUTIVE SESSION ENTERED AT 8:34 PM, EDT.

OPEN SESSION RESUMED AT 8:55 PM.

XI. RESOLUTION FOR ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE

BE IT RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of Superintendent of Schools, motion made by Trustee Lisa McGregor, and seconded by Trustee Roland Roderick, that the Board of Education approve a paid administrative leave for a probationary employee (#00406), effective February 15, 2018, pending the outcome of an investigation.

YEAS: All Trustees Present NAYS: None.

MOTION CARRIED. PAID ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE FOR PROBATIONARY EMPLOYEE, APPROVED.

XII. PROPOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION AND APPOINTMENT OF CLERK PRO TEMPE.

Motion made by Trustee Lisa McGregor, and seconded by Trustee Karen Geer, to enter into executive session to discuss the employment history of a particular person, specifically the evaluation of the superintendent, and to appoint Lauren F. French as Clerk Pro Tempe for the remainder of the meeting.

YEAS: All Trustees Present NAYS: None.

MOTION CARRIED. EXECUTIVE SESSION ENTERED AT 8:57 PM, EDT.

OPEN SESSION RESUMED AT 9:49 PM.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business or discussion, motion made by Trustee Lisa Dunkelberg, and seconded by Trustee Lisa McGregor, to adjourn at 9:50 PM.

YEAS: All Trustees Present. NAYS: None.

MOTION CARRIED. MEETING ADJOURNED AT 9:50 PM, EDT.

Respectfully submitted,

Tatia Z. Kennedy, District Clerk

Ed Siebels, President