

- Minutes of the Education Committee of Legislative Council Meeting March 13, 2019
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- Called to order at 7:05pm
- Members present: Dan Honan, Kelley Johnson, Phil Carroll, Paul Lundquist, Jordana Bloom, Dan Wiedeman
- Also Present Supt. Dr. Lorrie Rodrigue, Chairman of BOE Michelle Ku, Director of Business Ron Bienkowski
- No members of the public present.
- Paul Lundquist moved to accept minutes of March 26, 2018 Dan Wiedeman seconded to accept minutes. Motion passed.
- After Discussion it was decided that the next meeting will be Thursday, March 21st at 7:30pm.
- Questions below will also be submitted in writing through Education Subcommittee Chairman
- The Representatives from the Board of Education answered questions for the Education Committee
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- Question from Mr. Lundquist
 - What are mandates from state in past 1-3yrs that have cost implications?
 - ED. Legislation passed regarding whether student data is kept secure. Took a lot of time to look at contracts for any kind of app used throughout the district. Required Dir. of Technology, staff...hundreds of hours to review and not done. Not everything impacts \$, for example Dir. of Technology accomplishes this within her scope. Other things might require staffing, such as graduation requirements, para support, etc.
 - ED. We could put together visual and impact. Even if not cash impact, still takes away from what people are doing.
 - ED. Data analysis is really important and drives what we do.
 - DW. Can we share data with state legislators so that they could push back on mandates.
 - ED. There is a list from the state of unfunded mandates and the number is around 600
 - ED. Requirements keep getting pushed back, but district still needs to plan.
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- Questions by Ms. Johnson
 - How do we create measurable outcomes for educational objectives? There are new tools that show performance via measurable outcomes.
 - ED. We have indicators, everything from access to arts, science & technologies, and other things related to test scores, but other things like attendance.
- Questions from Mr. Lundquist

- How are we addressing a dip in test scores and how does it impact the budget.
- ED. We are now focused more on growth vs. cohort of students because kids change every year.
- ED. Need direction and oversight now because we're doing so much. How many formal observations, check-ins, final evaluation.
- PL. Have we seen teachers that are not up to par?
- ED. Yes, we do interventions all the time, and it's a labor intensive process. 100s of hours to change teacher evaluation—we pay people to do that—
- DW. What are the issues with the 4th grade as we have consistently lower scores?
- ED. We are looking at instruction and whether students are getting support they need, teaching, too. May need more professional development.
- DH. Does every teacher get evaluated every year?
- ED. Yes, in multiple ways. This is also a change.
- Questions from Mr. Weideman
 - Where would we find savings or rebate from solar?
 - ED. Would be shown in electricity. Ron working with Fred and working with vendor to quantify savings. Instead of paying Eversource, we pay the investor. The discount at Reed school is 2 cents off Eversource rate. SHES is not online yet. As we approach the end of the year we should see savings for both boiler and lighting upgrades. Based on comments from consultants, we've incorporated savings.
 - ED. p. 200. Energy is down.
 - DW. How do we know how much is electricity, gas, and oil?
 - ED. HS is exclusively on gas, but Hawley is currently on oil and soon to transition off of oil
 - ED. In a couple of years the only school w/oil is HOM and if we can ever get gas line we'd convert in a heartbeat
 - ED. Oil and diesel bid came up with Feb 27 and savings are ~\$2,000. Modest savings based on budgeted value.
 - ED. SHES solar is supposed to come online any day. Town runs the negotiation on the energy side.
- Questions from Mr. Wiedeman
 - Will propane busses result in cost savings to town either due to fuel or maintenance?
 - ED. Savings captured when contract re-negotiated. Vendor has a lot more experience with propane now, previously only Torrington used it. Also, engine efficiency goes up after a year.
 - ED. Also a benefit that we don't have exhaust smells. Also propane busses start right up in winter, other busses required as much as 40 min to startup in sub-zero weather.
 - ED. Town buys the fuel. This is the first year we have a full fleet, so have more buying power. No consortium price. We expect provider to supply

fueling facilities, temporary, above-ground fueling station. Whoever bids, needs to have capability to have pumps, generators, etc.

- ED. Will have another bid in the next couple of months. Good candidate for purchasing agent. Getting interest from companies interested in bidding.

- Questions from Mr. Wiedeman

- Is it possible to increase teacher:student ratio from 1:20 to 1:21 to save full-time teachers?
- ED. We use an average, because enrollment changes and we need flexibility. Kindergarten is the first time students enter the public school, could need literacy, para, or other support. Best practice says keep kindergarten sizes small to maintain flexibility and go up with older grades.
- ED. One kindergarten cohort entered with 50% special needs.
- ED. It's better to have an extra class than an extra para in most cases. Teacher is teaching and para is just support, so very different role.
- ED. Don't want to split kids up during school year, so add paras as needed.
- PL. If budget was cut with expectation to increase class size and save money on teachers would you do that or cut somewhere else?
- ED. Would cut somewhere else to preserve classroom size that matches current guidelines.
- ED. Maintain guidelines of class size.

- Questions from Mr. Wiedeman

- What is a "job coach" as listed on p.161
- ED. Job coaches have come into existing in the last several years. Work with students age 18-21, set them up with employment in town and supervise. Transport to job site to give students life skills. Required by state to provide transitional services. Working with community center to place students there.
- PL. Are there grants available to offset this cost?
- ED. We're looking at lots of grant opportunities. Costs fluctuate with number of students. Sometimes students are in a placement and then coming back into program.

- Questions from Mr. Wiedeman

- Is IT making use of purchasing agent?
- ED. Yes, there are a number of consortiums available, schools, municipal, etc. Purchasing agent is getting us involved with more consortiums than we ever knew about it. Dr. Of Technology prioritizes compatibility with existing equipment.

- Questions from Mr. Wiedeman

- Will transportation costs reduce with less kids?
- ED. Not necessarily, because reduction in students does not necessarily mean they are grouped together. They are spread out all over town and go to different schools.

- ED. We are down 83 kids YoY. We use actual enrollment numbers.
- ED. 2 tier bussing is running very packed at all levels. High school pm busses are less full, because those kids have more activities. 2 tier system made bussing more efficient.
- Questions from Mr. Wiedman
 - What is increase in special ed on p.154?
 - ED. We break it out several ways, by purchases and programs. The same number can be in two different categories. Every item gets reported as object and program, including salaries.
- Education committee members will submit additional questions to BOE
- How should we manage discussions with full council?
 - ED should be available for LC March 27 and April 3 to discuss bigger issues

Ms. Johnson moved to adjourn at 8:21pm. Ms. Bloom seconded

- Minutes recorded by Kelley Johnson