

East Granby Board of Education
Special Meeting Minutes for
Monday, September 30, 2019

Board Members Present:

Mr. Bob Paskiewicz
Mr. Jim Feeney
Mr. John Welsh
Mr. John Ziobro
Mrs. Lucia Ziobro
Mrs. Karey Pond
Mr. Bob Ravens-Seger
Mrs. Lynn Landolina

Board Members Absent:

Mr. Rob Crocker

Others Present:

Lisa Kline, Board Clerk
Dr. Mary Broderick, CABE Consultant
Tami Zawistowski, Visitor
Amanda Cormier, Visitor
Stefanie Mullane, Visitor
Carly McKenney, Visitor
Patrick McKenney, Visitor
Debbie Paskiewicz, Visitor
Brooke Jordan, Visitor
Joan Jordan, Visitor
Jim Hayden, Visitor
Christine Gallagher, Visitor
Sue Chester, Visitor
Jim Francoline, Visitor
Russell Rourke, Visitor
Shari Rourke, Visitor
Patrick Sweeney, Visitor
Julie Sweeney, Visitor
Paul Calebaugh, Visitor
Erin Criscitelli, Visitor
Rick Bortz, Visitor
Todd Zessin, Visitor
Steve Mosher, Visitor
Leslie Marques, Visitor
Sara Payette, Visitor
Glenn Zaugg, Visitor

I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

With a quorum present, Chairperson Bob Paskiewicz called the special meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and all recited the pledge of Allegiance.

Bob Paskiewicz reported that the Board of Education (BOE) considered five proposals from consultants to assist with the search for a new superintendent. The BOE interviewed three of the consultants and selected the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE). We currently pay an annual membership fee of \$5,392 to CABE for services including professional development/workshops, policy, and advocacy; their service cost for a consultant is approximately \$9,000. CABE was not only the best choice, it was the lowest bid. The Center for School Change does not provide consultant services for superintendents. Tonight's special meeting is not a debate but rather to discuss key variables of hiring a part-time, shared, or full-time superintendent. A BOE non-meeting will take place after the special meeting. Further information regarding the search will be made available and the community will be given the opportunity to participate in focus groups. A vote to hire a new superintendent will be made by the BOE at a public meeting.

II. Comments from Visitor Regarding Agenda Items

Paul Calebaugh invited East Granby (EG) residents to join a forum he created (East Granby Voices) where members can share commentary. Mr. Calebaugh explained that he supports quality education but our fiscal expenses are not reasonable. He shared information that he found on EdSight (CSDE's state portal that provides detailed information about schools and districts) including a \$19,290 cost per pupil for EG. That is \$3,937 more per pupil than Granby Public Schools and \$1,683 more per EG household. Mr. Calebaugh reviewed the 2015 Efficiency Study and found it to be inaccurate and biased. Our student scores are great but our costs are exorbitant. He feels that by combining districts, we would save on costs such as administrative and transportation while providing more opportunities for students.

Amanda Cormier is a graduate of EG and returned here with her husband to raise their children because of the quality of education. In response to Paul Calebaugh's comments, Mrs. Cormier

shared information based on fact. Mrs. Cormier works at a regional middle/high school in Connecticut. EG offers the same extra-curricular opportunities that her school offers and EG offers even more when it comes to traveling sports opportunities and Advanced Placement courses (EG offers 14 vs. 11 at her school). Her middle/high school has one full-time superintendent; there is one full-time superintendent for one of the four districts and three part-time superintendents for each of the other districts for a total of 5 superintendents in her regional school district. Mrs. Cormier is in favor of maintaining a full-time Superintendent. Combining districts does not necessarily mean you will save on administrative cost or provide more opportunities for students.

III. CAFE Discussion on Part-time, Full-time, and Shared Superintendent

Dr. Mary Broderick presented a study that she performed on Preston Public Schools where she examined part-time superintendents and the ramifications and feasibilities of having one. History shows that when the state required schools to be overseen by superintendents, the state hired itinerant superintendents to serve small towns. The small towns were not happy having people coming, overseeing their schools, and then moving on to the next district. Eventually, the state supported hiring part-time superintendents and they would pay for them assuming the small towns would one day pick up that role. In August 2016, there were 21 part-time superintendents in the state of Connecticut and Dr. Broderick interviewed 18 of them. She reviewed information gathered from CAFE and the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) about the responsibilities a superintendent has including education, financials, supporting staff and one of the most important, a relationship with the board and community. The expectations do not change from full-time to part-time. Dr. Broderick reviewed key variables as far as Preston was concerned in making the decision between hiring a full or part-time superintendent including student enrollment, the number of students receiving special education services, the number of schools in the district, the budget, cost per pupil, the number of administrative staff, and the district's definition of a part-time superintendent. Part-time superintendents are typically retired superintendents whose salary is capped by law, so retirement may limit the candidate pool. With a part-time superintendent, you need to rely on the talent of your staff to complete the work and it is difficult to mentor principals. You also need to consider staff for Special Education, Curriculum, Business Operations, and what can be managed in-house and out-sourced. You will need a strong team and support staff. Ask yourself in what capacity do you want your superintendent to serve. Questions to consider are where the district wants to be in 5-10 years, what the district is prepared to lose, and what qualities the district wants to attract in a candidate. On average, a part-time superintendent will stay for 5 years. John Welsh commented that we would need someone dynamic who can wear multiple hats; if not, we may have to hire an assistant superintendent or additional support staff. Lynn Landolina asked if the study quantified the increasing cost. Dr. Broderick responded that smaller districts have larger per student expenditures, districts that paid tuition had higher per student expenditures because it cost more to educate a high school student. If they were part of a regional district, the region covered the additional high school level tuition cost.

For the record, Preston Public Schools chose to hire a full-time superintendent.

Dr. Broderick worked on a cooperative agreement in which Salem paid tuition to send their high school students to East Lyme High School. Salem had already been sending their students to East Lyme High School for thirty years. There were several things that needed to be worked out, but they were fortunate to develop a contract between the two towns.

Bob Paskiewicz asked if the state was offering incentives for school districts to regionalize and when was the last time districts regionalized. Dr. Broderick replied that it has been a long time since districts regionalized and she is not aware of any state incentives. Instead they are offering cooperative services.

IV. Comments from Visitors

Jim Francoline commented on exploring the possibility of collaborating with Granby because they too are searching for a superintendent. Stefanie Mullane asked Dr. Broderick to please clarify the difference between a part-time and shared superintendent. A part-time superintendent oversees one district and a shared superintendent oversees more than one district. The only example of a shared superintendent Dr. Broderick knows of is Chaplin School and Regional District 11; they are both covered by the same (half-time) superintendent.

Tami Zawistowski referred to a chart presented earlier that gave comparisons of means and medians for a combination of PreK-12 and regional districts and asked if it was possible to get the

data for just the full range districts. Dr. Broderick replied that it is a little confusing because only Chaplin had a part-time superintendent overseeing grades K-12. All other part-time superintendents were covering the elementary and middle school levels only. High School students were either part of a regional high school or tuition was paid to send them to another school district.

Bob Ravens-Seger commented that you lose control with a shared regional BOE and the board is state mandated to maximize student performance. Bob Paskiewicz asked what kind of representation the BOE would have if it paid tuition to another district for EG students to attend their school(s). Dr. Broderick replied the BOE may not have any if the district they are paying already has a board.

A female visitor asked if a study was ever done on the financial standpoint of house values increasing or decreasing if/when school districts combine. Dr. Broderick is not aware of any studies performed.

Steve Mosher asked Dr. Broderick to highlight the key elements why Preston decided on hiring a full-time superintendent. Dr. Broderick speculated they may have felt the need to have a full-time educational leader.

Glenn Zaugg asked for the difference in salaries. Dr. Broderick estimated that for this area it is approximately \$99,000 for a part-time superintendent and \$185,000 for a full-time superintendent. That is base salary only and does include benefits and offsetting expenses.

Leslie Marques asked where the board is in the process of evaluating a superintendent, a job description, and getting input from the acting superintendent. Bob Paskiewicz replied that information will be put together by the consultant when she holds the community focus groups.

Lucia Ziobro asked Dr. Broderick to advise the board and the public about the focus groups.

Dr. Broderick responded that focus groups will cover a survey open to the entire community (even people who are unable to attend can participate) and various questions including what type of human being (skills and values) the community wants in a superintendent. It is a great needs assessment.

Jim Francoline asked why the superintendent's evaluations are not made public and student achievements are. Dr. Broderick commented that if it is a written evaluation, it should be made public. Bob Paskiewicz responded that past evaluations were verbal. In the future, if approved by the board, he would like to perform written evaluations so they can be made public. John Welsh added that had there been evaluation deficiencies in the past, they would have been written up.

Carly McKenney is a special education teacher that runs a very small program with a small caseload but she could not do her job on a part-time basis. She commented that you cannot manage a district part-time or with disruption, it is not good for the students. Patrick McKenney commented that our schools are amazing and staff needs support; without support, teachers will leave.

Dr. Broderick commented that the result of the focus groups will be a leadership profile; a comprehensive reflection of the information gathered. The board decides whether or not to accept profile and share it with candidates. From that, interview questions are developed and candidates are analyzed against the criteria.

Russell Rourke commented that education does not end in grade 12 and that is a testament to the citizens present tonight that went through the EG schools.

Stefanie Mullane asked how the members of the focus groups are selected. Dr. Broderick replied that it is an open invitation; the challenge is getting the word out. A schedule will be posted on the website.

V. Adjournment

MOTION: a motion was made by Jim Feeney, seconded by Karey Pond to adjourn the special meeting. **Motion approved unanimously.** The meeting was adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Kline
Board Clerk

These minutes are issued pending Board of Education approval.