

**COVENTRY BOARD OF EDUCATION
APPROVED MINUTES
MEETING OF THURSDAY, MAY 29, 2008**

Members Present: Larry Pietrantonio, Chairman
 Kathleen Ryan, Vice Chairman
 Cheryl Trudon, Secretary
 John Barrett
 Mary Kortmann
 Michael Whitham
 Richard Williams

Administrators Present: Dr. Donna Bernard, Superintendent
 Sherry Holmes, Fiscal Services Director
 Judith Richard, Pupil and Staff Support Services Director

Also present were Paul Noel, Director of Physical Plant and Facilities; Troy Hopkins, CHS Principal; Michele Mullaly, CNH Principal; David Petrone, GHR Principal; students of the Coventry's Caring Community program and their families; Coventry Boy Scout Troop 65; and a few citizens. All motions are directed to the Coventry Board of Education.

I. CALL TO ORDER

By: Chairman, L. Pietrantonio Time: 7:35 p.m.
Place: Administration Building Conference Room

II. SALUTE THE FLAG

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by L. Pietrantonio.

III. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

There was none.

Mr. Pietrantonio welcomed the Boy Scout Troop 65 and Troop Leader Matt Kyer. Members of the troop stated they were attending a Board meeting as part of their Citizenship in the Community badge. Dr. Bernard also took a moment to recognize the Boy Scouts in attendance.

IV. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

A. Information: Coventry Pride – Coventry's Caring Community Culmination

Dr. Bernard said she was proud to present Coventry's Caring Community Culmination as a segment for Coventry Pride. She explained the program to Board members and how she met with small groups of students to discuss community and caring. She introduced those student participants who were in attendance, gave them each a one-time-use camera of their own and a certificate of appreciation. In addition, Dr. Bernard showed a PowerPoint presentation of various pictures taken by the students as part of the project.

B. Information: Announcement 2008-09 Mini-Grant Winners

Dr. Bernard reviewed the mini-grant selections for 2008-09. She commented there was good focus on advanced placement classes. The executive summaries of the grants were in the Board members' packets. Dr. Bernard commended the staff for completing the application and supporting the development of new programs.

V. **CONSENT AGENDA** (one vote for all items)

- A. Approve PSSS Child Find Identification Procedures
- B. Accept Resignation of Alan Levy, CHS teacher

MOTION: To Approve the Consent Agenda

By: K. Ryan

Seconded: C. Trudon

Result: Motion passes unanimously.

VIII. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

VOTE: Approve Minutes of May 8, 2008

MOTION: To Approve the Minutes of May 8, 2008

By: C. Trudon

Seconded: M. Whitham

Result: Motion passes 4-0-3 (Barrett, Kortmann, Ryan abstain).

X. **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Discussion and VOTE: Revision Policy # 6153 Field Trips (VOTE: To be warned for revision on June 12, 2008)

Dr. Bernard stated the Policy Committee met and discussed the suggestions and made the recommendations to move forward.

J. Barrett noted the third to last paragraph and the statement that the building principal and the Superintendent of Schools approve field trips. He wondered if that meant the Board would not see those trips. That was confirmed to be accurate – the Board only approves out-of-state and/or overnight trips.

J. Barrett questioned the cost of substitute teachers used in a scenario when a large percentage of a class might not go on any given field trip.

Mr. Petrone responded with the example of Nature's Classroom, saying they may have approximately 40 students stay back. He continued, noting they do not use substitutes during that week, because of the high number of parent chaperones who go to Nature's Classroom.

Dr. Bernard said there are instances when, yes substitutes may be needed when field trips are scheduled.

R. Williams asked for confirmation that no district funds are used in funding field trips. Dr. Bernard replied that was true in most cases.

Dr. Bernard added that PTO fundraising is phenomenal in helping to support these trips.

J. Barrett had an additional concern in paragraph two and the elimination of the wording: *“Students who are experiencing academic difficulty may not be eligible to attend a field trip in consideration of the instruction in other classes that the student will miss while attending the field trip. Students who have a history of disruptive behavior in classes may not be eligible to represent the school by attending a field trip.”* He wondered if the one sentence, *“Should a student’s academic success be in jeopardy, a teacher may limit attendance on field trips.”* which is being added as a replacement was enough for the school to limit attendance. Dr. Bernard replied that the Policy Committee felt it was enough and that the recommendation was from Shipman and Goodwin.

M. Whitham questioned the last paragraph and wondered if the Board would not be responsible for those trips they do not approve. Dr. Bernard said the Board is responsible.

A discussion ensued about the athletic trips as they relate to this policy. It was stated this particular policy was for trips directly related to instruction as opposed to extra curricular activities.

J. Barrett returned the conversation to the second paragraph, saying the portion being removed “fuzzies” the statement. He said he’d like to see the paragraph more distinct by leaving in the original wording.

Dr. Bernard said the committee felt the wording was repetitive.

J. Barrett said it was there originally for a reason and it should stay to make things clear.

M. Kortmann said there was a legal reason it was stricken. K. Ryan agreed it was a legal recommendation.

C. Trudon said the new simpler wording leaves the decision up to the teacher, who has the best background knowledge of the student.

L. Pietrantonio said it gives the teacher more discretion and a broader base from which to make a decision.

R. Williams said he agreed with L. Pietrantonio that it gives the teacher more flexibility.

J. Barrett said there was a reason the wording was there in 2000, when the policy was originally adopted and by changing it the Board is taking something very straightforward and making it have too much leeway.

Ms. Richard noted the IDEA was reauthorized in 2004, so it is most likely the reason the wording has changed.

L. Pietrantonio asked if there was any further discussion and hearing none he called for the vote.

MOTION: To warn for revision Policy # 6153 Field Trips at the June 12, 2008 meeting.

By: K. Ryan

Seconded: M. Kortmann

Results: Motion passes 6-1 (Barrett against).

B. Discussion and VOTE: Adoption of Policy # 1312 Public Complaints Regarding Instructional Materials (VOTE: To be warned for adoption on June 12, 2008)

Dr. Bernard said this policy addition is a recommendation of CABE and is preventative in nature. She said that it behooves the Board, in controversial times, to have this policy in place.

M. Whitham asked if a definition could be included in the policy indicating what “Instructional Materials” would include.

Dr. Bernard stated a paragraph of definition could be added after the first paragraph.

J. Barrett stated it seemed like the steps to challenge material are very in-depth for such a small school.

M. Whitham said the policy notes a person would need to fill out the form and submit it to someone who could make a decision. Dr. Bernard agreed saying the issue could be resolved at a lower level before a committee needed to convene.

J. Barrett asked if it could end up going to a committee for review. Dr. Bernard said the curricular value of the item could be reviewed and the issue resolved before a committee would need to be convened, but it is possible it could go to committee or all the way to the Board level.

MOTION: To warn for discussion Policy #1312 Public Complaints Regarding Instructional Materials at the June 12, 2008 meeting.

By: K. Ryan

Seconded: M. Kortmann

Results: Motion passes unanimously.

C. Discussion and VOTE: Adoption of Policy # 7551 Naming/Renaming of School Buildings, Components of Buildings, and/or School Grounds (VOTE: To be warned for adoption on June 12, 2008)

Dr. Bernard said they went in search of this policy to see what other districts had in place. She said there are several situations where this could be very controversial and again it is important to have this in place as a preventive measure. She reviewed the policy and reasoning behind some of the timetables.

M. Kortmann asked if this policy would exclude someone who might want to donate \$1,000,000 and have a facility named after them.

Dr. Bernard did a quick review of the policy and stated that the Board can initiate the process if needed.

J. Barrett said he was concerned that with this policy in place, the Board might be overrun with petitions.

L. Pietrantonio said that situation could happen now, without the policy in place.

K. Ryan said she felt it was a very good policy to have in place.

MOTION: To warn for adoption Policy #7551 Naming/Renaming of School Buildings, Components of Buildings, and/or School Grounds at the June 12, 2008 meeting.

By: K. Ryan

Seconded: C. Trudon

Results: Motion passes unanimously.

