

**COVENTRY BOARD OF EDUCATION
APPROVED MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THURSDAY, AUGUST 30, 2007**

Members Present: Milton S. Natusch, Chairman
Richard Williams, Vice-Chairman
Kathleen Ryan, Secretary
Jennifer Beausoleil
Larry Pietrantonio
Cheryl Trudon

Members Absent: Craig Couture

Administrators Present: Dr. Donna Bernard, Superintendent
Sherry Holmes, Fiscal Services Director

Also present were Judith Richard, Director of Pupil and Staff Support Services; Raymond Grasso, CGS Principal; Michele Mullaly, CNH Interim Principal; Scott Sadinsky, CNH Assistant Principal; Troy Hopkins, CHS Principal; Wil Duchesneau, CHS Assistant Principal; Paul Noel, Director of Physical Plant and Facilities; and one concerned citizen. No newspapers were represented. All motions are directed to the Coventry Board of Education.

I. CALL TO ORDER

By: Chairman Milton S. Natusch Time: 7:35 p.m.
Place: Administration Building Meeting Room

II. SALUTE THE FLAG

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Natusch. Chairman Natusch asked the Board for any request to add to or change the order of the Agenda. There were none.

III. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

There were none present.

IV. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

A. Information: Opening of the 2007-2008 School Year

Dr. Bernard stated “we were polished and ready to go.” She said we had wonderful staff development programs with new teachers and all staff in the days leading up to the opening of school for students.

1. First Week Enrollment

Dr. Bernard handed out the enrollment figures for the first day of school. Attached were enrollment projections which were completed over ten years ago when our construction project was being considered. She noted that our numbers are within the upper and lower projection figures. Dr. Bernard stated that we are dead on right in the middle and Wednesday’s numbers are “before Labor Day” numbers and they could rise next week.

2. District Level Changes

Dr. Bernard said we are well staffed and well prepared. She handed out a sheet indicating new certified staff that have been hired and district-level staffing changes that have taken place.

Dr. Bernard informed the Board that all certified staff positions have been filled with one exception, which is to fill a maternity leave at the middle school. This Family and Consumer Science position is being covered by a sub temporarily. Dr. Bernard said our new staff is wonderful and talented. All of our “late notice” vacancies were filled in time for new teacher orientation. Dr. Bernard commended the principals and Judy Richard for the excellent job they and their search committees did with interviews and finding these new teachers.

Dr. Bernard noted that the Technology Department assignments have been completed with the hiring of Kathy Zanotti, who serves as our Technology Specialist. Fred Lambert is the MIS/Network Administrator and Bill Holmes is the Computer Repair Technician. The Board will hear this fall from this department about their goals.

The new Curriculum Resource Team has also been put in place. Dr. Bernard reminded the Board that originally there was a full-time certified position in the budget for curriculum coordination. Instead the position was split into pieces. There is a K-7 Resource Teacher, two 8-12 coordinators, a technology support person, and an administrative representative. This different avenue saved the district money.

Carla Kennedy has been assigned as the new Gifted and Talented teacher. This position will now cover grades K-8.

L. Pietrantonio asked how the time for the Gifted and Talented teacher would be distinguished now that it will cover more than just the middle school. Dr. Bernard replied that it will be a transition year, split between the three schools. Four days per week will be spent at the middle school and one day at K-5.

C. Trudon asked for clarification regarding the Curriculum Resource team. Dr. Bernard explained that the technology support will come from Kathy Zanotti as part of her role as Technology Specialist.

R. Williams asked how much longer we would be working on this curriculum project. Dr. Bernard says we are in a three to five year phase. Hopefully we will get a lot accomplished this year and perhaps by the end of the year parents will be able to see results online. The Curriculum Team will come before the Board and report their progress and goals. R. Williams stated he was hoping for a more specific timeline and asked when we would be done discussing curriculum. Dr. Bernard answered that curriculum is ongoing and always changing, but this year and next we will see leaps and bounds of progress.

J. Beausoleil asked about the website development. Dr. Bernard explained that the site-based mini-webmasters are in place for this year and that Kathy Zanotti will also have her hands in the website.

Dr. Bernard went on to talk about the August 27 staff development day. Dr. George Sugai from UCONN was the guest speaker. Dr. Sugai is well known for his work on improving school climates. The theme of the morning was improving school climates and

improving the schools' customer service to improve student results. With the emphasis on "serving", Dr. Bernard presented each Board member with a free "soft serve" ice cream cone coupon. All staff also received a coupon on opening day.

Dr. Bernard relayed the good experience she had doing a "Donuts with Donna" session at the Coventry Farmers' Market on Sunday, August 26. The first time event was a huge success and will be done annually before the start of school.

B. Information: Summer Maintenance Projects

Paul Noel stated that a lot of work was done by the maintenance crew this summer. Mr. Noel presented pictures to the Board via a slideshow. Mr. Noel also handed out a list of the summer projects that were completed. He gave credit to his crew of maintenance workers and custodians at each site for the work they did.

Dr. Bernard commented on the "tons of work" that was done, as support to the Asbestos project, by our own maintenance staff. In conjunction with the welcoming schools' goal and objective, the entrance to the high school was discussed and revamped. This will be a huge improvement and will increase the friendly environment.

Wil Duchesneau commented on how well maintained the schools are and it speaks well to the maintenance and custodial staff.

C. Information: Upcoming Goal Reports

Dr. Bernard referred to the sheet in the Board packets with the line up of the administrative goals that will be presented at upcoming fall meetings.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Accept Resignation of Holly Perron, CGS Psychologist

B. Accept Retirement of Marjorie Bailey, Custodian

C. Accept Resignation of Rebecca Coax, CNH Teacher

Motion: To accept the items on the Consent Agenda

By: K. Ryan Seconded: R. Williams

Result: Motion passes unanimously.

VI. REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN

Chairman Natusch welcomed everyone to a new school year. He has been continuing to receive information from EASTCONN and Great Path Academy. He encouraged members to visit Great Path if they could. It is a very unique program where the students do very well.

VII. COMMUNICATIONS

None.

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

VOTE: Approve Minutes of June 28, 2007

C. Trudon asked for clarification on page 2, third paragraph from the bottom, next to the last sentence. It was decided the sentence will read, "Work will be done during the school year as a result of project modifications."

MOTION: To approve the minutes of July 26, 2007 as amended.

By: K. Ryan

Seconded: L. Pietrantonio

Result: Motion passes 4 - 0 (J. Beausoleil and R. Williams abstain)

IX. OLD BUSINESS

Information: Student Management Procedural Update – CNH and CHS Administration

Dr. Bernard did an introduction of the new CNH Administrators, Michele Mullaly and Scott Sadinsky.

Mr. Sadinsky handed out a paper entitled, "Student Management Procedural Enhancements and Updates." He explained the TRAC program at CNH and the benefits of its continued use. They have also put into place a new office referral procedure. If an infraction occurs which is more serious than could be handled with the TRAC program, teachers will notify the main office immediately. Mr. Sadinsky or Ms. Mullaly will address the situation immediately with the student at the room. This will prevent referral lag time. They also plan to increase parent communication and will be bringing parents into the school more regularly.

Ms. Mullaly talked about "personalizing the learning environment." They are going to spend time and teach students to be responsible citizens in school. Ms. Mullaly stated, "It is all about relationships. You can't teach someone if you don't have a relationship with them."

Troy Hopkins led the conversation regarding changes and updates at the high school. Food is no longer allowed in the classroom. This issue has had inconsistencies in the past. Now there will be a school-wide practice in place. The next item discussed was "class removals and parent notification." Teachers are now required to notify a parent within 24 hours if a student is removed from their class.

Wil Duchesneau talked about the school-wide assembly and that Mr. Hopkins addressed the school's mission statement and that these are good points for students to hear. Mr. Duchesneau relayed how he reminded the students that they all have choices and can control whether they have to end up in his office for discipline. Another new procedure is each teacher has a student sign out log. This will help track students who may be out of classes on a regular basis and can help if there are any security issues. The discipline for alcohol infractions was also updated. In addition to the current policy of five days of in-school suspension and counseling, the offender will be suspended for 30 calendar days from all school activities. This is for a first time offense. If there is a second offense, the school administration will move for expulsion. There will be a separate mailing to parents about the change to discipline for alcohol, because there was not time for it to be included in the handbook.

There was discussion about new legislation and its effect on this issue.

L. Pietrantonio stated he liked the updated discipline for alcohol use. He would like the public to know that it is "approved by the Board." It was the consensus that this could be added to the letter that goes home to parents/students.

A discussion ensued about who had a chance to be involved in the decision making. Mr. Hopkins and Mr. Duchesneau elaborated on the process.

It was stated that there are various avenues for the students to be heard, e.g., homeroom, class advisor, student council, enrichment period, contemporary issues, etc.

J. Beausoleil mentioned she heard feedback from some high school students about the proposed high school advisory council. This was from students who may not “usually” be interested in this type of involvement. Instead, they saw it as a possible way to deal with adults instead of peers. She is excited to hear how it will turn out.

X. NEW BUSINESS

None.

XI. REPORT OF BOARD MEMBERS

A. Information: Fiscal Services Committee Update – R. Williams, S. Holmes

Ms. Holmes presented the June 2007 and July 2007 fiscal reports, which were also included in the Board packets. The schools made it successfully to the end of the June 07 fiscal year with a balance of \$819.54.

There was a short discussion about oil prices.

R. Williams said that it was great that we ended the FY07 bookkeeping in such a timely fashion. Ms. Holmes agreed and added that the last FY07 check run was printed just this week, which is the earliest in recent years.

Mrs. Holmes presented a memo from the State regarding the new magnet school legislation. Dr. Bernard commented on the huge swath of initiatives that have been put in place from the Governor’s office on down. There are going to be much higher levels of accountability on all levels. Due to the new magnet school mandates, we will have to account for this possible cost when developing next year’s budget. Ms. Richard added that if a special needs student goes to the magnet school there will be additional charges to the sending school district.

B. Information: School Building Committee Update – L. Pietrantonio

L. Pietrantonio stated that the Asbestos Abatement project at the Robertson School is complete. The Water Project has come in at just over one million dollars. At the Grammar School a decision needs to be made as to how they are going to run the piping – inside or out. The committee is looking at all options with as little disruption as possible. Hopefully by the end of September they will have firm figures.

Mr. Grasso said he had more concerns about outside work than if it was done inside. Trenching around the building will disrupt the only playground area at CGS.

Ms. Mullaly asked how long the interior work at CNH will take. L. Pietrantonio said it shouldn’t take more than a couple of days.

