

**ENFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
MARCH 2, 2010**

The Enfield Board of Education held a Special Board meeting on Tuesday, March 2, 2010 in the Henry Barnard All Purpose Room located at 27 Shaker Road, Enfield, CT.

1. **CALL TO ORDER** The special meeting was called together by Chairman Stokes at 7:00 PM.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** Chairman Stokes

3. **FIRE EVACUATION ANNOUNCEMENT** Chairman Stokes announced the fire evacuation announcement.

4. **ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Judy Apruzzese-Desroches; Joyce Hall; Vincent Grady; Peter Jonaitis; Chuck Johnson; Tom Sirard; Greg Stokes; Donna Szewczak; and Stacy Thurston.

**Absent:** None

**Also Present:** John Gallacher, Superintendent; Tony Torre, Assistant Superintendent and FHS Student Representative Meghan Ruff

5. **DISCUSSION ON FY10-11 PROPOSED BUDGET AND SYSTEMIC CHANGE**

Chairman Stokes distributed a draft proposal and action plan to begin the discussion process for Systemic Change from the Republican Caucus.

Ms. Hall asked if we would be discussing the FY10-11 budget since it was on the agenda. Chairman Stokes stated that he plans to talk about the systemic change and the future of the district. It is on the agenda to discuss later if Board members would like.

Chairman Stokes read the proposed charge – to create a process/plan that addresses the immediate and long term needs of the Enfield School District. A plan that strengthens the Enfield School system – continues to provide a quality and diversified education for all students; while spending revenue more efficiently.

Chairman Stokes discussed the immediate with Board members - the Alcorn School Imbalance; balance class sizes in the elementary schools; meet with the transportation department and communicate with the community.

Chairman Stokes discussed the long term with Board members – Community information sharing and discussions; outside consultant; project manager; blue ribbon panel of district experts (possible composition, possible charge, suggested solution that needs to be addressed); communication with the community during the process and communication with community before vote and implementation.

Chairman Stokes commented that these suggestions are to start the discussion tonight for starting the process for systemic change. Chairman Stokes believes the plan will outlive the term of the Board. Chairman Stokes would like to put the plan in place and have the community on-board with the plan. Other districts are making similar changes due to the

economy. Chairman Stokes does not want to move fast and further stated that we need to do this right. Discussions are needed.

Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches stated you are looking at two separate plans. One is looking at the racial imbalance at Alcorn School while balancing classroom sizes and the other is a long term plan. Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches believes it needs to be one cohesive plan.

Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches asked if balancing classroom sizes will be a set number across the district or will we strive to meet certain classroom numbers?

Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches likes the idea of a project leader. This will be a massive undertaking. We will need someone on a full time basis to put together a successful plan.

Chairman Stokes agrees that he does not want to disrupt students in one school and then redo the process again next year. Chairman Stokes does not want to see classroom sizes for grades 4-6 go beyond 25-26 students and grades K-3 go beyond 18-22 students. Chairman Stokes stated from personal experience, if class sizes go beyond these numbers, it makes it overwhelming to teach. These are Chairman Stokes suggestions for class sizes and this will have to be decided by Board members.

Chairman Stokes stated we are waiting to see if there will be any savings from insurance premiums. If there are, we can use the funds to help balance classroom sizes.

Chairman Stokes stated the administration and Board members have jobs and a project manager is a good idea.

Mr. Grady asked about timelines to implement the systemic changes. Chairman Stokes stated this is something the Board will need to decide. Chairman Stokes would like this to be discussed tonight and addressed at the next Board meeting. There is no rush to set a timeline.

Mr. Grady further stated that if changes are going to be implemented for the 2011-12 school year, we would need something in place by January 2011. Chairman Stokes agreed with Mr. Grady.

Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches stated the Blue Ribbon Committee is a great idea but we need parent representation, Town Council representation and possibly the Town Manager and someone from buildings & grounds on this committee. This committee needs to encompass not only the education community. We will also need experts on this committee. Head Start and Pre-Kindergarten future needs should also be considered.

Ms. Hall reviewed ideas from the Democratic Caucus - the plan needs to be developed by a disinterested or an independent expert with a full time responsibility to the plan. All grade levels need to be addressed. We also need to look into full day kindergarten, the potential for pre-kindergarten expansion and Head Start expansion.

Ms. Hall further stated that we must also plan for high school reform and an increase STEM focus. This plan also needs to address racial and economic balance. The plan will also need to discuss the two high schools with the possibility of different concentrations. One high school could focus on liberal arts and the other could focus on science, math and vocations.

Ms. Hall commented that updates should be reported to the Board on a regular basis. Preliminary reports should be made public to the community via community conversations. The full plan would need to be presented to the Board by December 2010. Board decision would need to be done in January 2011. This way the plan would be included in the 2011-12 budget with a phased in implementation to start in September 2011.

Chairman Stokes stated the timeline can be discussed further. Mr. Grady also suggested this also and logically it makes sense.

Ms. Hall disagrees with the Blue Ribbon Committee. The plan should be developed by someone that is disinterested. This way the Town can react to the plan. Input from the community can be reflected in the plan but would not be required.

Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches disagrees with Ms. Hall. The community needs to be involved in the development of the plan but not responsible for the plan. Ms. Hall stated that would be difficult to do.

Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches stated a steering committee is needed to make sure the plan moves forward. Ms. Hall believes experts are needed to make the decisions. Ms. Hall believes we need someone that is personally involved in making the decisions.

Mrs. Szewczak agrees with Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches. The committee will need a specific charge and they will need to follow it closely.

Mr. Sirard agrees with both Ms. Hall and Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches but he is afraid the process will get bogged down. Mr. Sirard values everyone's input. A specific charge and timeline is needed or the plan will get bogged down.

Chairman Stokes recommends hiring a consultant that will work on data. The community needs to be included in the process. If the community does not agree with the plan, they will not be satisfied in the end.

Mr. Grady suggests having both. Get the ideas from the community and give it to the disinterested person to produce the plan. Chairman Stokes believes having a project manager is needed. You will need community input along the way. Keeping the lines of communication open is also needed.

Mr. Johnson suggested having multiple focus groups-committees under the project leader. If we have multiple groups of 5 or 6 people, you can accomplish a lot more than a group of 30 people.

Mr. Jonaitis distributed information prepared by him to Board and audience members regarding his proposed changes. Mr. Jonaitis does not want to drag things out. He does not believe this will get done. Mr. Jonaitis stated we are paying our principals, administrators and central office staff a lot of money. Mr. Jonaitis does not want to see a disinterested person come here when we have experts here. The Board needs to make serious decisions. The Town and State are faced with a serious economic situation. Something needs to be done and quickly. If it means closing schools and redistricting, let's do it.

Mr. Jonaitis would like to keep classes in grades K-3 with 18-20 students and in grades 4-6 with 18-26 students. Mr. Jonaitis would make some of the large high school classes smaller and make some of the extremely small classes larger. Mr. Jonaitis would also like to combine high school classes. Mr. Jonaitis also stated that he has a plan for an early retirement plan.

Mr. Jonaitis reviewed the reduction in the number of elementary schools; the possible options to be explored for elementary school buildings and homogeneous groupings for math and reading.

Ms. Hall commented on the homogeneous groups; that is also called tracking. The State Board of Education has sent out a position statement regarding this and we are not supposed to do

this. Mr. Jonaitis believes we would be better off not doing what is suggested by the State Board of Education.

Mr. Grady asked about the consultants and the data driven reports that are required. Would you be looking for tutors to do this? Mr. Jonaitis stated the classroom teacher would need to do this.

Mr. Sirard stated everyone is in favor of cutting jobs just as long as it is not their job. Mr. Sirard can see a problem developing. Mr. Sirard believes in hiring a disinterested person to make these decisions is a good idea. Mr. Jonaitis stated we would be paying someone \$50-70K to make these decisions. This could fund one teaching position.

Mr. Jonaitis reviewed plans for secondary regular education classes; co-taught classes; class loads and department heads.

Mr. Jonaitis reviewed ideas to ponder – one set of department heads for all 3 secondary schools and central office special education personnel to work out of JFK.

Ms. Hall asked about the time frame for implementing these changes. Mr. Jonaitis would suggest doing what we can, as quickly as we can. What we can't do, do the following year. Mr. Jonaitis does not want to drag this out.

Mr. Jonaitis reviewed other potential changes – 1 hour long classes at the secondary schools; ½ hour elective classes; the elimination of the 10:23 AM lunch at JFK; develop a language arts program at JFK; homogeneous groups for the true honors student; offer two types of Spanish classes and TAG expansion program.

Mr. Jonaitis believes these changes can be made and we will still be able to offer quality education programs and will save money in the process.

Mr. Jonaitis has included four (4) locator forms in the materials presented to Board members.

Mr. Jonaitis reviewed the costs for student agenda books; TLC; retirement incentives; furlough days; ADCO after school gets out; put a hold on workshops; writing curriculum and department meetings.

Dr. Gallacher stated the total for furlough days would be around \$210-\$220K for one day.

Mr. Jonaitis reviewed professional development days; the team leadership program at Fermi and band.

Ms. Hall stated the team leadership program is offered at both high schools. This is one of the most positively received classes offered. Mr. Jonaitis believes this class needs to be reorganized.

Chairman Stokes appreciates all the information and feedback provided tonight.

Ms. Hall stated curriculum development has been done on a regulated seven-year cycle. Unless the State Frameworks modify or rewrite the curriculum, changes would then be needed.

Ms. Hall further stated the State Frameworks just presented a new Algebra I curriculum. Mr. Jonaitis stated you need to be careful with this. The past and the numbers have not changed. The curriculum is continually tweaked. We do not have to make a complete curriculum revamp. We don't have to go crazy on curriculum changes.

Chairman Stokes stated the Board will need to decide where we go from here. To implement anything without a process can cause disharmony. Chairman Stokes stated we can't wait, but if we go too fast or slow, it can be harmful. Board members need to think about the long term so we are moving forward. Chairman Stokes is trying to monitor this so the process is well thought out and done correctly.

Mr. Jonaitis would leave everything as is if we had the money within reason. Mr. Jonaitis asked about conducting AP classes for both high schools on-line. The principals may need to balance some of these changes. Let our administrators and the principals make the decisions. Changes are needed. The principals can balance the classroom sizes.

Chairman Stokes stated Mr. Jonaitis is discussing a plan. Chairman Stokes stated he is trying to develop the process. The process needs to be in place first so when the plan is active, we will have the trust of the community.

Mrs. Szewczak stated that detailed inventory, usage of the building, usage of staff and the condition of the buildings is needed. This needs to be done. An expert is going to need this.

Ms. Hall moved to invite representatives from Manchester and East Hartford that are undergoing this process to come to a Board meeting and explain their process.

Dr. Gallacher stated an RFP will need to be in place first. Chairman Stokes agrees with Dr. Gallacher.

Mr. Jonaitis will take Ms. Hall to Manchester to view their plans.

Chairman Stokes stated we have had a great dialogue tonight. Leadership can meet to discuss this further. The focus discussion for systemic change was accomplished tonight.

Mrs. Szewczak moved to establish an RFP. Chairman Stokes does not believe we are ready for an RFP yet. As we move forward with this process, we can make motions.

Mrs. Szewczak would like to see what an RFP looks like. Dr. Gallacher will send Mrs. Szewczak one to look at. Mrs. Szewczak asked what is needed on an RFP. Dr. Gallacher stated you would need someone that understands facilities, demographer abilities and education consultants. You would need to specify the items you are looking for.

Mrs. Szewczak asked who did the expansion of the schools. Dr. Gallacher believes it was done by the Omega Group; he would need to research this.

Mr. Grady moved to rescind the budget vote. Dr. Gallacher responded that the discussion of the FY10-11 Budget is on the agenda but not a motion to rescind.

Mr. Sirard agrees with Mrs. Szewczak regarding an assessment of facilities and staff utilization. Mr. Sirard agrees with Mr. Jonaitis that teachers should teach and we should maximize their teaching skills to reach the most students they can in a classroom.

Chairman Stokes stated leadership can meet to start the process moving forward. Chairman Stokes asked Board members to think about systemic change.

**6. ANNOUNCEMENT – MARCH 9<sup>TH</sup> REGULAR MEETING CANCELLED, NEXT REGULAR MEETING WILL BE MARCH 23RD**

Chairman Stokes reminded everyone that the March 9<sup>th</sup> Regular Board meeting has been cancelled. The next Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7:30 PM in the Council Chambers.

**7. ADJOURNMENT**

Mrs. Apruzzese-Desroches moved, seconded by Ms. Hall to adjourn the Special Meeting of March 2, 2010. All ayes, motion passed unanimously.

Meeting stood adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Joyce P. Hall  
Secretary  
Enfield Board of Education

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Zalucki, Recording Secretary

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