

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 8, 2015**

A regular meeting of the Enfield Board of Education was held at Town Hall in Council Chambers, located at 820 Enfield Street, Enfield, CT on December 8, 2015.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Tom Sirard.
2. **INVOCATION OR MOMENT OF SILENCE:** Stacy Thurston
3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Stacy Thurston
4. **FIRE EVACUATION ANNOUNCEMENT:** Tom Sirard announced the fire evacuation announcement.
5. **ROLL CALL:**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Stacy Thurston, Vin Grady, Walter Kruzel, Raymond Peabody, Lori Unghire, Mike Ludwick, Tina LeBlanc, Vin Grady and Tom Sirard

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Dr. Jeffrey Schumann, Superintendent and Mr. Christopher Drezek, Deputy Superintendent

6. **BOARD GUEST(S):** - None

7. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:**

- a. Student Representatives – as presented
- b. FY2016-17 budget Update – as presented
- c. Stowe Early Learning Center Open House – as presented
- d. BOE Retreat – as presented
- e. Christmas Break – as presented
- f. Superintendent's Recap & Next Steps – as presented

8. **AUDIENCES** - None

Brian Reale, Abbe Road – Mr. Reale would like the Board to keep the Valedictorian and Salutatorians. If this is eliminated, you will remove our incentive to strive to be better. As mentioned it would remove the competition and pressure but it is good to be competitive. This is a happy competition amongst the students. The competition has helped him and his friends to strive to be the best that we can. Thank you.

Alex Salisbury, Hoover Lane - Mr. Salisbury believes the Valedictorian and Salutatorians have helped him to strive to be a better student. He does not believe it has any affect towards negative competition. He does not have a problem with the 4.0 grading scale change. He feels the 3 tier grading system would work best. This helps to distinguish between the higher level courses. Thank you.

Alex Jensen, South Meadow Lane – Mr. Jensen has concerns with the speakers for the Valedictorian and Salutatorians. He would like a guest speaker but also wants the Valedictorian and Salutatorian to speak. He does not have a problem with the decile rank. Eliminating the Valedictorian and Salutatorian would not be fair to the students. He likes us

using more student body input for the graduations. This will make it more about community. The Deans for each grade level will address many concerns at each grade level. It is similar to a student senate. This needs to be more clearly defined. Thank you.

Lori Bosco, Simon Road – Mrs. Bosco stated that all students are different and learn differently. Her daughter loves her A/P classes. All the students deserve to be rewarded for their hard work and classes need to be weighted. Other towns are rewarding their Valedictorian and Salutatorian. We need to continue to reward our students for their hard dedicated work. She does not have any problems with the 4.0 grading scale and feels it is long overdue. Thank you.

Ashley Anoabeng, Thistle Lane – Ms. Anoabeng stated we are all striving to be the best and competition will make us better and prepared for the real world. She takes A/P classes and deserves to receive the credit. She works really hard for her grades. Her siblings see her working hard and she wants them to strive to be the best they can. The Valedictorian and Salutatorian deserve to be recognized. They have been working hard for their grades. If we change this to guest speakers it will become a popularity contest. She believes the block scheduling will work. Thank you.

Abigail Bosco, Simon Road – Ms. Bosco stated eliminating the Valedictorian and Salutatorian will create more stress for students. The class weights will all be the same. Students will still strive to be the best and to get the highest grades will still be competitive. Making these changes will not remove the stress and competition. She likes the idea of block scheduling and the Eagle hour. She would prefer the normal class rank instead of decile rank. Class ranks are simpler. Thank you.

Yvonne Girard, Ridgefield Road – Ms. Girard likes the 4.0 grading scale and block scheduling. Honors and A/P classes need to be weighted. She does not believe that the current class ranking and having a Valedictorian and Salutatorian add stress. There are no benefits to making these changes. She believes using a decile rank will create stress. Students will still compete to be the best. We want competition. It is human nature for us to compete. It makes us better. The teachers that she has spoken to are against this. Thank you.

Meghan Connery, Leonard Road – Ms. Connery feels that the Valedictorian and Salutatorian deserve the right to speak in front of their peers at graduation. They have worked hard for their class rank. If we change this it will become a popularity contest. We need to have weighted classes. She is taking honors classes and works really hard as well as the other students in these classes. She has been told to strive to be better all of her life. If we change this, we will all be taking average classes. Why would we try harder to be the best if everyone will be average? Weighted classes matter when you go to college. This change will affect our future when we go to college. We need weighted classes and students will continue to strive to do better. Thank you.

Jennifer Hannah, Conlin Drive - Mrs. Hannah stated that we have taught our kids to strive to excel and to do better than we did. Students need drive to excel in school, at your jobs and in life. All A's are not equal. Students want and deserve to receive the best grade they can get. Honors and A/P class work is different than average class work. She is currently paying for her children to take A/P classes and wants to know why. The Valedictorian and Salutatorian have worked hard and deserve to be recognized. There should not be any voting to choose the speakers at graduations. She hopes these changes do not pass. She is starting to lose faith in the Enfield Public Schools. She has fought for her children's health. Students don't stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. She does not want to see class rank eliminated.

Danielle Maloney, Moody Road – Ms. Maloney will attend high school next year. She wants to attend UCONN and wants to take A/P classes. Many students look for scholarships to help them pay for college tuitions. Tuitions keep increasing. You will be taking away honors classes that will hurt student's chances to obtain scholarships. Thank you.

Meghan Hannah, Conlin Drive – Ms. Hannah stated that she has been taught to challenge herself and to strive for the best she can be academically. Teachers expect more from honor students. She does not believe that honors classes and average classes should be the same. They are very different and the weighted grades need to remain as is.

Abigail Bosco, Simon Road – Ms. Bosco stated the new block scheduling will allow us to take 32 credits. We will be required to take 25 credits in order to graduate. Why will students need to take 32 credits? What will we do with the extra 8 credits? Thank you.

Ashley Anoabeng, Thistle Lane – Ms. Anoabeng stated when you go to college they will not hold your hands and tell you this class will be hard. She added that there is a clear difference with the decile rank between 1 and 10. She would like to know her class rank. Thank you.

Alex Salisbury, Hoover Lane - Mr. Salisbury stated that he and his friends compete every day for our class rank. Our friendships have made us more competitive. Study halls gave him the opportunity to take additional classes. Our current system would allow for the junior class to transition easier into the new high school. Thank you.

Akua Nimo, Thistle Lane – Ms. Nimo stated that her daughter has had an allergic reaction to latex paint 3 times and has been transported to the hospital. They had to use an epi pen. This is very serious and wants someone to look into this. Education is a huge priority to her and her children. The students deserve to receive the credits they have worked hard to get.

Yvonne Girard, Ridgefield Road – Ms. Girard has spoken to many people about the weighted courses. Colleges will recalculate to get a raw GPA. College's value honors class grades. Leaving the weighted courses makes sense. Thank you.

Brian Reale, Abbe Road – Mr. Reale likes the idea of block scheduling and plans to take A/P Chemistry and Physics. He hopes block scheduling will free up other classes for students to be able take these classes. You will not be doing us any favors eliminating weighted courses. Thank you.

Ashley Anoabeng, Thistle Lane – Ms. Anoabeng stated we should make the colleges strip the weights and recalculating grades. Please keep it the same and do not change this. Thank you.

9. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mrs. Thurston thanked everyone for coming and for speaking tonight. You gave her a lot to think about. She wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Mr. Kruzel thanked the audience members for speaking. You gave us some good information to think about. He thanked the voters for electing him to the Board. He thanked his family for their support and MaryAnn Turner for her guidance and hard work.

Mr. Kruzel wished everyone a Merry Christmas. He attended the Fermi Safe Grad Auction and had a great time. He also attended the Torch Light Parade and lighting of the Town Christmas Tree. It was a well attended event.

Mr. Peabody thanked everyone for coming to tonight's Board meeting and for speaking. He appreciates your input. We represent you and we need your input. He attended the Fermi Safe Grad Auction and had a great time. He will attend the Prudence Crandall fund raiser event on Thursday and will read The Night before Christmas to the grade 3 students.

Mr. Peabody agrees with the audience members about keeping weighted grades. The students are working hard and deserve to be rewarded. Mediocracy is not expected in the real world and

should not be allowed in high school. It is ok to have some stress and pressure. He appreciates the student's comments. Students should also be rewarded as the Valedictorian and Salutatorian.

Mr. Peabody wished everyone a Merry Christmas and to be safe.

Mrs. Unghire thanked everyone for attending tonight's Board meeting. She appreciates your comments and will take this into consideration. She congratulated the staff at Parkman School for the 50th anniversary celebration. The event was well attended and successful event.

Mrs. Unghire wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated that students are competitive scholastically and athletically. We should take pride in our students that spoke so eloquently tonight. She does not agree with changing weighted courses and eliminating Valedictorian and Salutatorian. The students work hard to get good grades just like we work hard and set goals. We are happy that you are setting goals for yourself. We respect your opinions and thank you for speaking tonight.

Mrs. LeBlanc attended the parent financial aid information night. The information you receive is very helpful. They distributed packets to the families. These are very helpful and contain a lot of information. If you were unable to attend, please contact your child's guidance counselor for one. She urged families to attend this event next year.

Mrs. LeBlanc wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Mr. Neville thanked the people that voted for him. He also thanked his wife for her continued support.

Mr. Neville thanked the audience members that spoke tonight. Your passion was shown in your comments. We received a proposal of what might be best for our students and have shared this information with the public. We are looking at this in a different way after hearing from you. We need to continue to hear from you. He commended the high school principals for their ideas. Their intent was well intended. Students will be able to take more A/P classes next year with additional course offerings.

Mr. Neville likes the administrations leadership approach. We will get the best from our students with this new approach. He likes the 4.0 grading system. He believes the Valedictorian and Salutatorian should be validated for their work. He is concerned about the stress because he has seen what it can do first hand. He likes the idea of speakers at the graduation. Colleges are doing this quite successfully. He believes class rank should stay as is and the weighted grades discussion has sparked many questions.

Mr. Neville encouraged audience members to continue to attend these meetings. We like to hear from the students and the parents.

Mr. Neville wished everyone a Merry Christmas and happy holidays.

Chairman Sirard stated Enfield Public Schools lost a very dear friend this week – Dick Smyth. He was a true partner and friend to our school system. He did many things for us and was a business man that took care of his customers. He will be deeply missed.

Chairman Sirard congratulated Parkman school for their 50th anniversary.

Chairman Sirard congratulated the speakers at tonight's meeting. You are the most respectful group of speakers that has come before the Board. It has been a pleasure listening to you. You were on-point and did your homework. Thank you for coming to tonight's meeting. The

students that spoke were awesome. Please continue to come to these meetings. We need to hear from you. If we don't hear from you, we think everything is okay. A process has been discussed and we are trying to make this process as public as we can. He wished there were this many people at all of our Board meetings.

Chairman Sirard wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. He hopes your holidays are filled with love and urged you to be safe.

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Transition Update

Dr. Schumann updated the Board regarding progress that has been made regarding the new high school. We received the certificate for occupancy for chemical storage room and the automotive classrooms are eminent. We believe this certificate of occupancy will be coming soon. We were able to use existing 32 phones in the Fermi wing and will be purchasing 34 next week. All rooms will have phones next week for communications.

Mr. Peabody asked about air quality tests at Crandall. Chairman Sirard stated that this will resume at Prudence Crandall. We will keep you posted on this.

Mrs. LeBlanc would like us to look into the latex paint issue. Dr. Schumann stated that he has seen some e-mails about this. The paint that was used was recommended and is commonly used paint.

Mr. Peabody asked if this was used in isolated areas. Dr. Schumann stated that he has only read about the paint used in the gymnasium. He will look into this.

11. NEW BUSINESS

a. BOE Policy #5127.1 Purposes of the Weighted Grade System – First Reading

Mr. Ludwick stated the Policy Committee met last night and endorses proposed policy changes for a first reading tonight. We have heard from parents and students about this policy change. They have done their homework and a good job expressing their concerns. They were very articulate. This is how you debate items. Sometimes we will agree to disagree. We are making this discussion transparent. We are trying to make the best system we can for the benefit of the students. He thanked everyone for coming tonight's meeting.

Mr. Ludwick reviewed the proposed policy changes.

Mr. Grady agrees with Mr. Ludwick that the proposed policy changes are for the benefit of the students. This is a good policy.

Mr. Kruzel added that we needed to clarify the policy and have done so with these changes.

Mr. Grady moved, seconded by Mr. Kruzel that the Enfield Board of Education approves BOE Policy #5127.1 Purposes of the Weighted Grade System as a first reading.

A vote by **roll-call 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

Suspend the Rules to add an Item to the Agenda:

Mr. Kruzel moved, seconded by Mrs. Unghire to add an item to the agenda – Item 11b.

A vote by **roll-call 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

b. BOE Policy #5127.1 Purposes of the Weighted Grade System – Second Reading

Mr. Grady moved, seconded by Mrs. Thurston to add item 11b. BOE Policy #5127.1 Purposes of the Weighted Grade System for a second reading.

A vote by **roll-call 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

Mr. Kruzel moved, seconded by Mr. Ludwick that the Enfield Board of Education approves BOE Policy #5127.1 Purposes of the Weighted Grade System as a second reading.

A vote by **roll-call 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

Chairman Sirard asked Board members if there is a general consensus to keep the Valedictorian/Salutatorian and class rank the same. Board members all agreed to keep these items the same.

12. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Curriculum Committee

Mr. Neville reported that the Curriculum Committee met on November 18th and discussed Science Electives; Adaptive PE and Unified Sports; Writing Center; A/P Statistics and Music electives. Committee members approved AP/UConn Environmental Science, Chemistry 220 and half credit science electives for 2016-17. They also approved the Adaptive PE, Unified Sports and A/P Statistics course for 2016-17. He added that we are closely monitoring costs.

Mr. Peabody stated the A/P strand classes will be brought to the lower grades first and will be carried into the upper grades. This will help to make our schools shine. We are very excited about the curriculum.

Mr. Neville stated the fee parents are paying for is for the A/P test, not the course. This way the students can receive credit when they go to college. His wished we could afford to pay for these tests but we can't. We recently won an award about the number of A/P classes we offer.

Mr. Grady left the meeting at 8:22 PM.

b. Building Committee

Mr. Kruzel reported the Building Committee met on December 3rd in the new Fermi Wing. Telephones were a huge concern that issue has been resolved.

Mr. Neville added that any problems that have arisen have been taken care of quickly by Amar and Dean. They are on top of everything and are doing a great job.

Mr. Kruzel added he was concerned with the certificate of occupancy issues but we are moving forward. The active shooter training will be held and then they will demolish the D wing.

c. Policy Committee - None

13. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mrs. LeBlanc moved, seconded by Mrs. Thurston that the Regular Meeting Minutes of November 24, 2015 be approved. A vote by **show-of-hands 8-0-0** passed unanimously.

14. APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS PAYROLL - None

15. CORRESPONDENCE AND COMMUNICATIONS

- a. Invitation to attend the Active Shooter Training Session at Enfield High School on December 10, 2015 at 7:30 PM.

16. AUDIENCES

Colene Ceniglio, Shannon Drive – Mrs. Ceniglio thanked the Board for listening to our concerns and answering our e-mails. She has been to previous meetings where this was not the case. She sincerely appreciates the demeanor of this Board and the rapport you are trying to establish with the community. She will continue to be very proud to be a teacher in our school system and to have her children attend our schools. Thank you.

Liz Davis, North Maple Street – Ms. Davis is very concerned with the allergic reaction that an EHS student had to the latex paint. This is someone's child life and she would like an action plan to correct this. She brought this up at the Town Council meeting last night. This has happened three times and is a very serious condition. She would like to know if the paint was dry and was it really safe. Thank you.

Jennifer Hannah, Conlin Drive – Mrs. Hannah stated she is paying for the A/P class two times.

Dr. Schumann believes you will pay for the UConn materials and the test.

Mr. Peabody stated you are paying two times for the A/P test and for the ECE test.

Abigail Bosco, Simon Road – Ms. Bosco thanked the Board for listening to their concerns. You are paying twice for the UConn class or the UConn credits and the A/P credits.

Ashley Anoabeng, Thistle Lane – Ms. Anoabeng thanked the Board for listening to them. You are awesome. You do not need to take the A/P test if you are taking ECE class. If you are taking ECE, you can earn either 4 or 8 credits that are transferable to most state colleges. If you are taking A/P classes you can earn up to 5 credits if you pass the A/P test. On the final for the ECE courses, if you receive a C or better you can receive UConn credits. You do not have to take the A/P exam, but it is recommended.

17. EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

18. ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Thurston moved, seconded by Mr. Kruzel to adjourn the Regular Meeting of December 8, 2015.

All ayes, motion passed unanimously.

Meeting stood adjourned at 8:37 PM.

Tina LeBlanc
Secretary
Board of Education

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Zalucki, Recording Secretary