

JAY/WESTFIELD JOINT SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
Tuesday, October 13, 2015 at 6:00 P.M.
AT THE JAY/WESTFIELD SCHOOL

Board Members in attendance: Sally Rivard, Loren Petzoldt, Kevin Amyot, Chad Prue, Jeff Morse (by phone)

Administration/School Personnel in attendance: Kristy Ellis, Principal; John Castle, Superintendent; Tara Morse, Bookkeeper; Rebecca Velazquez, Recording Secretary

I. At 6:09 pm the J/W School Board meeting was brought to order by Sally Rivard.

II. Kevin Amyot moved to approve the Minutes of September 8, 2015. Loren Petzoldt seconded the motion, and the vote carried.

III. Public Comments

Information:

Kristy Ellis presented the PreK program's website on behalf of teachers Julie Ste. Marie and Lonnie Whittier. Jwpreschool.weebly.com has received 450 visits since launching this September. The site is a great way to connect with parents, posting notices, updates and photos.

General information about the preschool program was discussed. The school's PreK certificate has come in and the program has been awarded 5 stars by the star program. 14 of 15 enrollments came from the towns of Jay and Westfield. By comparison, only 4 children accessed the off-site preschool program last year. Kristy feels that this will make a huge impact on the upcoming kindergarten class. The current kindergarteners, most of whom did not benefit from a preschool program, have been joining the full-day PreK students in the afternoon.

Discussion:

Loren Petzoldt expressed concern about the children's images being put on the internet and asked if there had been releases signed. Kristy pointed out the message on the home page, welcoming parents to contact the school if they would not like their child's picture to be used. No children are identified in the photos.

The Board expressed sincere gratitude and extended their congratulations to Julie Ste. Marie and Lonnie Whittier for all of their hard work and success.

IV. Financial Reports:

Information:

Tara Morse reported that the 2014/15 Audit is supposed to begin next week, with the new accounting firm, but she is concerned she will need to postpone because the 2013/14 Audits have yet to be sent by Gene Beshaw & Associates.

Discussion:

Kristy Ellis inquired if it were possible to switch the unfinished 13/14 work to the new company, but Tara said that since Beshaw's contract did not stipulate a time frame it would be very difficult to pull that business. They are in possession of all financial books. Loren Petzoldt expressed concern that the State could hold out funds if the Audit is not in by deadline. Tara will continue to press Beshaw & Associates for the completed work.

Action:

Loren Petzoldt motioned to approve the August and September 2015 Financial Statements. Chad Prue seconded the motion. Vote carried.
Orders were reviewed and signed.

V. Principal's Report:

A. School Year Structure and Reporting

Information:

Kristy Ellis spoke about switching from a quarter structure to trimesters. Reducing reports to three would minimize the time teachers are spending on report cards. Kristy feels that the report cards, as they currently exist, are broken tools. As someone who helped design the current report card, she recognizes a need for updates. The SU is currently looking at feedback and there may be upcoming changes. The report cards will remain standards-based, but will do better at drawing a complete picture and of expressing growth. High school and Junior High will remain on quarters.

Discussion:

Kevin Amyot attended an NCSU meeting last month, at which John Castle spoke about this very matter. Kevin agreed with both Kristy and John that increased communication and engagement with parents throughout the year is much more beneficial than a report card. Electronic portfolios is one of the ideas on the table for increased parent access to student performance. Kristy agreed that a teacher's time is better spent emailing parents than working on reporting paperwork. Sally added that it benefits the students themselves to see their own week-to-week progress.

B. Facilities

Information:

1. Paul LeGrand told Kristy Ellis that he could install the new classroom divider himself. The Board previously believed there would need to be an extra installation charge.
2. Kristy is concerned about the state of the cafeteria tables, which are starting to show real wear and tear. She advised replacing within the year.
3. Jodi Fortin, school nurse, has offered a washer/dryer to the school, to be installed in the supply closet. She has been bringing loads of school laundry home and would find this much more convenient. The only cost to the school would be installation.

Discussion:

1. Kevin Amyot expressed a desire to compensate Paul for the installation, noting that he routinely goes above and beyond. All agreed that they would like to pay him. Loren Petzoldt suggested some sort of gift card. There was a general discussion about how lucky the Board feels to have Paul as the school's Custodian. Kristy said that he has even been mentoring 6th grade boys who need a little extra guidance.
2. Loren wondered if the tables could be replaced incrementally, in order to spread the payments out. Kevin offered to help Kristy explore options for replacement. Chad Prue recommended the website webstaurant.com.

Action:

Kevin Amyot motioned to accept the washer/dryer from Jodi Fortin, to be installed in the school's supply closet. Chad Prue seconded the motion. Vote carried.

C. Blood Drive

Information:

Kristy Ellis is exploring the option of hosting a Red Cross Blood Drive at the school and would like to reach out to the Jay Focus Group and the employees of Jay Peak for participation. The Red Cross has said that as few as 30 donors would make the drive viable. Kristy is interested in finding ways for the students to volunteer. She has been looking for opportunities for the children to feel like they are giving to the community.

D. Community Eligibility Program

Information:

The SU applied for the Community Eligibility Program on all the schools' behalves and Jay/Westfield Elementary was approved, due to the current rate of students qualifying for Free & Reduced Hot Lunch being 55%. 32% students are on the Direct Certified list. Participation in the Program would cost the school around \$10,000, but the result would be that the entire school would have free hot breakfast and lunch. This includes preschoolers, who count as full students in food service figures. Participation would eliminate the paperwork for the students who currently get free lunch and the need for payment from students who currently pay for lunch.

Discussion:

Kevin Amyot wondered how often the Program reviewed the school and worried that it would be difficult to be taken out of the Program after setting a precedent with students and parents. Kristy believes reviews only happen every 2-3 years, but also thinks that a school cannot be outright taken off the program. It may be that the input cost changes.

The Board would like to table any decision until all the applicable numbers are in, including the actual cost.

VI. Unfinished/NewBusiness:

A. Jay/Westfield Joint School District

Information/Discussion:

The Board discussed how transportation costs would be broken down if Jay and Westfield were to merge into a joint school district and continue to use different methods for transporting students to the Junior High. They also discussed how the per pupil rate would be affected. Loren asked if, for example, the Westfield rate is currently \$12,000 and Jay's is \$15,000, would each school's be \$13,500? Another question was if Jay's status as a "goal town" would go down by merging with Westfield.

Kristy Ellis reported that Glenn Hankinson, Business Director for NCSU, will be running the numbers to see how a potential joint district will affect the towns. He recently ran numbers for Troy and they found that no money would be saved by joining the Union.

B. Future Community Forum centered on Act 46

Information/Discussion:

The Board asked for Kristy's recommendation on this matter. Kristy advised a meeting with the community only after the Board has been able to look at Glenn Hankinson's numbers.

C. Budget for FY 2017

Information/Discussion:

Kristy Ellis reported that \$15,000-\$20,000 needs to come off the top of the budget to meet the new threshold. A salary increase will be taking affect on top of that. She stressed that it will be a difficult budget and that she will be working closely with Glenn and John Castle.

Kristy felt very strongly that she couldn't reduce staff. The school cut 2 full-timers from the budget last year. Kristy admitted that salary costs are very high because the school has a number of experienced, quality teachers at the highest end of the salary range. Her hope is that, in the next few years, there will be a few natural staff changes and that the attrition will catch up to number of teachers.

The Board discussed the general bias of the system, as it exists, comparing North Country track meets to South Burlington ones. It is hard to say that schools are funded equally when one like Jay/Westfield has to mitigate poverty. For example, the buses here drive 45 miles for students and while a school in Burlington may not even run a school bus.

Lastly, Kristy noted that she and John are exploring the option of applying past surpluses to future budgets.

D. Adult Lunch Meal

Action:

Chad Prue motioned to approve the increase in the Adult Lunch Meal price. Kevin Amyot seconded the motion and the vote carried.

VII. Other Business:

Action:

Kevin Amyot motioned to approve the following revised policies. Chad Prue seconded the motion and it carried:

- D.8 Alcohol and Drug-Free Workplace
- D.11 Drug and Alcohol Testing
- E.26 Tobacco Prohibition

VIII. Future Agenda Items/Date for Next Board Meeting:

The Board confirmed Tuesday, November 10, 2015 as the date of their next Board Meeting.

Future Agenda Items:

The following will be discussed with more data:

1. Budget for FY 2017
2. Act 46 Community Meeting
3. Cafeteria Tables
4. Community Eligibility Program

IX. Executive Session: Sally Rivard moved to enter executive session at 7:34pm and invited Kristy Ellis and John Castle to stay. Kevin Amyot seconded the motion, and the vote carried. Sally Rivard moved to exit executive session at 7:39pm. Kevin Amyot seconded the motion and the vote carried.

XI. Adjourn : Kevin Amyot motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:40pm. Sally Rivard seconded the motion. Vote carried.

<u>Meetings:</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
NCSU Policy Committee	Thursday	October 15	5:30 p.m.	NCSU A219
NCSU Full Board	Thursday	October 15	6:30 p.m.	NCSU A209
Jay/Westfield Board	Tuesday	November 10	6:00 p.m.	Jay/Westfield School

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Velazquez
Recording Secretary