

1 **Shaker Regional School Board**
2 **Meeting Minutes**
3 **December 18, 2008**
4

5 IN ATTENDANCE:

6 **School Board:** Bill Hart, Diane O’Hara, Roy Roberts, Tom Goulette, Preston Tuthill,
7 Sumner Dole, Student Representative: Kaitlyn Van Horne

8 **Administration:** Superintendent Michael Cozort; Business Administrator Debbie Gay;
9 Principals: Emily Spear, Mary Morrison, Russ Holden and Aaron Pope; Director of
10 Student Services Tonyel Mitchell-Berry

11 **Guests:** BEST President Jeanie Hibbard, Gerry Ryder

12 **Regrets:** Carolyn French Witham
13

14 CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

15 Chairman Bill Hart called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.
16

17 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

18 The Board discussed the November 20, 2008 draft meeting minutes. The minutes were
19 accepted as presented.
20

21 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

22 **BEST - BES PTO:** BEST president Jeanie Hibbard addressed the Board in regards to the
23 accomplishments of the organization. Ms. Hibbard stated that over 8,000 hours had been
24 volunteered for the past school year, and that BEST was presented the Blue Ribbon
25 Award for the 23rd consecutive year. She reviewed the numerous projects that BEST had
26 completed, including the Fall Family Festival, Bingo Night, new additions to the
27 playground, a new refrigerator for the teacher’s lounge, and the Christmas Elf program.
28 Chairman Bill Hart extended his gratitude to the organization for all of the work that they
29 continue to do at Belmont Elementary School.
30

31 **BES Computer Club:** Gerry Ryder of the BES Computer Club discussed the history of
32 the club. She explained that the club operates in two sessions per year, with different
33 projects covered in each session. Projects are designed to reinforce basic computer skills,
34 and include the 4th grade reception video, making greeting cards, making game boards,
35 and using animation. Ms. Ryder stated that the members are able to use both Macs and
36 PCs interchangeably, and are able to help other students during class. The hopes of Ms.
37 Ryder are that someday, each classroom will be equipped for live broadcasts from the
38 students.
39

40 FINANCIAL REPORT

41 Deb Gay distributed the financial report through the Board packet and fielded questions
42 from members of the Board. Sumner Dole inquired to the process for using the
43 MasterCard, expressing concern for keeping records of all items purchased with this
44 method. Ms. Gay assured him that all receipts and all necessary detail are retained for
45 these purchases.
46

1 Sumner Dole asked if services from Metrocast were provided free of charge. Mike
2 Cozort explained that a basic package was free to the District, but in order to increase the
3 speed of technology, the District purchased a faster package for the middle and high
4 schools. Mr. Dole suggested that the Board push for free services when the Metrocast
5 contract comes before the Town of Belmont for renegotiation.

6
7 Debbie Gay reported that catastrophic and building aid issued by the State of NH would
8 be lower than expected. She stated that catastrophic aid is typically under funded, and
9 that the District anticipates this shortfall.

10
11 Debbie Gay distributed a copy of a memo regarding the 2008-2009 revenues, stating that
12 an error occurred which will raise more funds through taxes than what is needed. The
13 District contacted the Department of Revenue Administration and was advised that it is
14 not possible to lower the tax rate at this time, so the additional funds will be set aside and
15 used to offset taxes in the next year.

16
17 REPORTS

18 *Administrators:* Administrators' reports were included in the Board Packet, with updates
19 provided by each administrator.

20
21 Mary Morrison stated that the winter concert included wonderful music and
22 presentations. Emily Spear stated that the readiness concert was great, and that the
23 Christmas Elf project was able to collect food and gifts for 44 local families. Aaron Pope
24 reported that the Middle School also had a wonderful holiday concert, and congratulated
25 Travis Akerstrom for winning the school geography bee. Russ Holden informed the
26 Board that the High School had held their winter concert, that the school year was
27 running smoothly, with everyone gearing up for vacation.

28
29 *Board Members:* Bill Hart asked the administration if there were any families still being
30 affected by the power outages due to the past ice storm. At this time, all families in
31 Belmont and Canterbury have electricity. Sumner Dole discussed public safety,
32 questioning the emergency management plan for the area and the effect this would have
33 on the schools. Pret Tuthill commented that Doug Ellis was extremely busy due to
34 weather related issues at all of the District buildings.

35
36 *Superintendent:* Mike Cozort reported that the District newsletter had been mailed out,
37 and thanked Jackie McGettigan for all of her hard work on this project. On Sunday, he
38 participated in an Emergency Management conference call with other state
39 superintendents. Mr. Cozort commented on the memorial service held for former Board
40 Chairman Graham P. Chynoweth, stating that it was a wonderful tribute to Graham, and
41 that he will be missed.

42
43 OLD BUSINESS

44 *2009-2010 Draft Calendar:* Mike Cozort reviewed Draft 4 of the 2009-2010 calendar.
45 He stated that he is trying to align the District calendar with Winnisquam and Laconia
46 School Districts due to the vocational technical programs they house. Mr. Cozort

1 highlighted the addition of Columbus Day as a holiday, that the start date was scheduled
2 for September 1st with an end date of June 18th. The Board suggested that the start of the
3 school year be scheduled for August 25th, moving up the date for graduation and allowing
4 for snow days.

5
6 *On the Horizon:* The Board reviewed the outlined On the Horizon Calendar. The Board
7 acknowledged that a date needed to be set for a Board Retreat, and scheduled a budget
8 session for Saturday, January 3rd.

9
10 NEW BUSINESS

11 *Special Education Report:* The Director of Student Services, Tonyel Mitchell-Berry
12 presented a power point to the Board reviewing the District's Special Education
13 programs. Ms. Mitchell-Berry reviewed the statistics for each of the 14 Indicators for
14 2006-2007, highlighting District rates compared to State rates and State targets. She
15 stated that there are currently 287 students utilizing Special Educational services within
16 the District.

17
18 Ms. Mitchell-Berry provided an update on the Special Education challenges within each
19 school. The additional staff at Belmont Elementary has been wonderful, and has made
20 the case load more manageable. She stated that BES needs to consider the addition of a
21 third preschool class, with the addition of a preschool assistant. The split between typical
22 students and special needs students is exceeding the 50/50 split desired to maintain
23 proper student interaction and growth, and the addition of a third class would provide the
24 opportunity to balance this split.

25
26 Canterbury Elementary has an overwhelming case load of over 39 students for one case
27 manager. Meeting evaluation timelines has become an issue, but with part time help
28 from the High School case manager, the timelines are being met. With the large case
29 load, the challenge becomes ensuring that the outlined IEPs are implemented properly.

30
31 The Middle School has been successful in making the transition for Special Education
32 students from the Elementary School to the Middle School environment. The challenge
33 at this school continues to be the method of involvement for students, using inclusion
34 techniques versus a contained program, or a hybrid of both. The District has utilized all
35 three methods in the recent past.

36
37 Work at the High School level has focused on increasing student skills through work
38 study programs and evaluating students who will need approval for reasonable
39 accommodations when attending colleges or technical schools. The challenge in this area
40 is analyzing the needs for the upcoming school year.

41
42 At the District wide level, Ms. Mitchell-Berry has been working with the guidance
43 department to create and update policies within Special Education and 504 identification.
44 Training and installation of new tracking software, CASE-E, has been taking place. Due
45 to the work load for the District psychologist, many services have been outsourced.

1 Members of the Board asked several questions. Sumner Dole questioned the District's
2 involvement once a student leaves the school. At this time, there are no services in place
3 for students after graduation/completion. Tom Goulette questioned the monthly fee for
4 preschoolers. Ms. Mitchell-Berry explained that the District is not allowed to charge
5 tuition to students requiring Special Educational services, so only typical students would
6 be required to pay a monthly tuition fee for preschool.

7
8 *Policy Development:* The Board reviewed several policies that were up for a first
9 reading. These policies included IHAM, Health Education and Exemption from
10 Instruction, which is a state required policy allowing for students to opt out of health
11 education classes; IMBD, High School Credit for 7th and 8th grade Advanced Course
12 Work; IHBI, Alternative Learning Plans, which is a state requirement; and IHCA,
13 Summer Learning Activities, which is also a state requirement. Pret Tuthill requested
14 that any proposed edits be submitted via email.

15
16 Policy BHE, School Board use of Electronic Communication, and policy BEA, Regular
17 Board Meetings, were presented for amendment. These policies include current practices
18 of the Board that have not been formally adopted as written policy.

19
20 ***A motion was made by Pret Tuthill, and seconded, to adopt Policy BHE, School***
21 ***Board use of Electronic Communication, and Policy BEA, Regular Board***
22 ***Meetings, as presented in drafts dated 12/11/08. The motion passed***
23 ***unanimously.***

24
25 *Demographic Study Draft:* Action on the draft Demographic Study was moved to
26 January to allow Board members the opportunity to review the information. Mike Cozort
27 suggested that the demographic study be updated every other year to reduce the cost
28 associated with this project. Tom Goulette noted that the information contained in the
29 report did not align with information provided by DRED, and asked that this be
30 addressed by the study's author.

31
32 *403B Service Fee:* Deb Gay distributed a memo regarding monthly fees for employees
33 participating in the 403B retirement plan. She suggested that the \$3 per employee
34 monthly management fee be paid by the participant. Ms. Gay stated that this request still
35 needs to be addressed by the union.

36
37 *School Care Rates for 2009-2010:* Mike Cozort stated that the District had been told to
38 anticipate a 15% increase to health insurance rates for the 2009-2010 school year. He
39 was happy to report that the increase was only 7.2%.

40
41 ***A motion was made by Pret Tuthill, and seconded, to approve the***
42 ***recommendation of the administration to enter into a contract for health***
43 ***insurance with School Care for the 2009-2010 academic year. The motion***
44 ***passed unanimously.***

1 *Senior Class Trip:* Russ Holden reviewed a request for the senior class trip to Lake
2 George, NY. Mr. Holden stated that pricing for the trip was based on participation by 40
3 students, but only 19 students had signed up. He asked the Board for their support of the
4 trip, with the understanding that it would not likely take place unless more students
5 participate. It was suggested that the class trip be reevaluated.

6
7 ***A motion was made by Roy Roberts, and seconded, to support the***
8 ***recommendation of the administration and accept the proposal for the Senior***
9 ***Class trip. The motion passed unanimously.***

10
11 *Budget Development and Hearings:* Diane O'Hara discussed the second draft of the
12 2009-2010 budget, highlighting a few key items. She requested that all questions or edits
13 be submitted to her through email.

14
15 Deb Gay stated that the budget hearings have been scheduled for February 3rd in
16 Canterbury and February 4th in Belmont.

17
18 Pret Tuthill questioned the process if the budget does not pass. Mike Cozort stated that
19 someone would need to make a motion for a total amount, and the Board would be
20 responsible for making it work. Until a total amount was passed, the meeting would not
21 come to a close, but could be recessed for the Board to gather further information.

22
23 *At 5:32 p.m., Bill Hart adjourned the meeting, accompanied by a motion by Pret Tuthill,*
24 *and, by unanimous roll call vote (6-yeah, 0-nay), entered into non-public session, in*
25 *accordance with RSA 91-3:II(c).*

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27
28 Respectfully Submitted,

29
30 Robin M. Schofield
31 School District Clerk