

**BETHLEHEM AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES  
TUESDAY, APRIL 14, 2009**

Members of the Board Human Resources Committee met on Tuesday, April 14, 2009, in the Dining Room, at the Education Center. Present were the following school board members: Michele Cann, Judith Dexter, Irene Follweiler, Charlene Koch, Loretta Leeson, Eugene McKeon, and Benjamin Tenaglia, III. Also in attendance were Solicitor Donald Spry, Assistant to the Superintendent for Finance Administration Stanley Majewski, Director of Special Education Richard Agretto, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Mary Katona, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources Thomas K. Washington, and Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joseph A. Lewis.

The meeting of the Board Human Resources Committee was called to order by Mrs. Irene Follweiler at 9:21 p.m.

**COURTESY OF THE FLOOR** – Steve Antalics, Ridge Street, Bethlehem, spoke about out of state school districts' accomplishments and student achievements. He questioned the evaluation process of Bethlehem Area School District teachers, and stated that poor students are a result of poor teaching. He also stated that it appears that unless a teacher retires or resigns this is the only way a teacher leaves the system, but never for poor teaching. He believes there is a message in those out of state school districts that Bethlehem Area School District can learn from. He stated that BASD has great plans, but if they worked we would be a top-notch district. He believes that students are not being educated. The system in BASD implies that all teachers are equal. He urges the district to look into this. The district evaluates students, but it is not evaluating teachers the way it should. If this were addressed, it would address the problems of the district. He also stated that money motivates people.

Mrs. Follweiler interceded and confirmed that there is an evaluation tool in place for teachers at BASD. Dr. Lewis commented that the money can be another debate, and he stated that the district has worked with Mr. Zieger and Mr. Washington regarding teachers. He also stated that teachers have been dealt with in a confidential way, and it is seen in retirements and resignations. He also confirmed that the district has an evaluation tool for the teachers, and the district does not overlook bad teaching. Mr. Zieger does not shield them neither. Dr. Lewis asked Mr. Washington if he would be able to sit with Mr. Antalics and show him the evaluation tool.

Craig Zieger, BEA President and Gifted Teacher, soon to be retired after 35 years. He addressed the public and the board even though he had no plans on speaking, but could not stand by while Mr. Antalics made comments to the board about poor teaching in our district. He stated as a teacher he does not want more money for teaching he wants children performing very well. That means far more to him when they are able to perform at state level.

He exclaimed, "Keep your money Mr. Antalics; I don't want it." He stated that charter schools drain districts of their money, and about \$8 million dollars from our budget goes to charter schools. He asked Mr. Antalics if he has checked and researched how charter schools operate. Mrs. Follweiler asked Mr. Zieger to please address the board. Mr. Zieger also spoke about tenure and the purpose it serves. He said it provides due process, but does not protect bad teachers. He stated that tenure just means that they just can't say you are fired, and protects teachers from being replaced because someone wants a job for a friend or family member. He stated that he co-chaired the evaluation process and confirmed that it is working. He resents public comments that we, the teachers are not doing our jobs and children do not perform. We are all working very hard. He said he is sick of everybody putting teachers down for not meeting AYP. Mr. Zieger then thanked the board for their time.

**BEHAVIOR SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY 113.2 – FIRST READING** – Mr. Washington presented this new policy that Mr. Agretto brought back from his Special Education meeting. The policy is a requirement of IDEA. Mr. Washington asked the board to review this policy. Mr. Agretto added that he had the solicitors review it first.

Mr. McKeon pointed out that the policy number on the policy was 113.1, but 113.2 on the agenda item. Mr. Washington advised the correct number is 113.2, and it would be corrected.

Mrs. Follweiler asked the board if it was acceptable to put the policy for a second reading and maybe a final reading on April 27, 2009, at the Regular Board Meeting. The board agreed to put the policy on the agenda on April 27, 2009.

**PROPERTY RECORDS POLICY 706 – THIRD READING** – Mr. Washington presented the revised policy for its third reading. He referred the board to page two and stated the added language regarding obsolete computer equipment was put in a bullet format.

Mrs. Follweiler asked if there were any other questions or discussions on this policy. She polled the board for a fourth and final reading on April 27, 2009, at the Regular Board Meeting. The board agreed to put the policy on the agenda on April 27, 2009.

**USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES POLICY 707 – THIRD READING** – Mr. Washington presented the policy for its third reading. He made reference to page two of the policy and the language inserted for Class A and Class IA. He noted the requirements for Class IA are new and assumes the board would like to take time to review the added language.

Mrs. Leeson advised she would vote “no” on the changes to this policy. She felt the policy was getting far too convoluted with the board deciding who is and who is not an organization under this policy. She thinks the number of organizations that fall into this category is far more extensive than just the Hurricanes and Bulldogs. She believes that the district is excluding some of our other organizations, which she feels should fall under this category such as Boy Scouts, which should be supported. She is no longer debating this item.

Dr. Lewis stated he is on the Boy Scouts Board and assured the board that they have no issue paying some minimal charges as detailed in the lease policy. He said what is clear to us is that there are some organizations like the Boy Scouts that are very well funded. They have assets, own buildings; have a full staff, and some volunteers. That is why this policy was created in response to those groups that are strictly volunteer, have no physical assets, and are exclusively feeder programs to our district. He also stated, while Boy Scouts are very supportive and do wonderful things for our kids, we need to determine what groups can exist and cannot exist through the use of the facilities and payment for services that our facilities have. Dr. Lewis understood where Mrs. Leeson was coming from. Dr. Lewis stated that, “We probably all have different organizations we would like to see use our facilities. We can simply say “nobody pays,” these are community schools, and open the doors, but we have budget issues; we are trying to be realistic about the fact that we need to have janitors clean, and we need to have people watch some of our more sophisticated systems in terms of site managers. That is why the administration is recommending this.

Mrs. Leeson stated she wanted to provide some counter points to issues Dr. Lewis brought up. She stated the Boy Scout Board certainly has paid individuals, but the individual troops do not and they need to be sponsored by an organization. Many of them are sponsored either by a church, community, or they are a

school-based-sponsored organization. She also said, the Boy Scout Board may not have an issue with this policy, but those troops do. It impacts their ability to service some of the young people in our schools. She thinks that administration is trying to make this only about the Bulldogs and the Hurricanes, but the CYO programs fall under the same category right now and that is going to be a large number of organizations that currently are using the facilities. She thinks this policy is not particularly effective.

Mrs. Follweiler asked if there were any other discussions. She polled the board to put the policy on the agenda on April 27, 2009, at the Regular Board Meeting. The board agreed to have the policy put on the agenda on April 27, 2009.

**TRANSPORTATION POLICY 810 – SECOND READING** – Mr. Washington presented the policy for its second reading. He stated that after suggestions from some board members, it was decided to put the language into the guidelines. The guidelines were on the back of the form. Mr. Washington stated the language in there would meet everybody's needs. There are about 214 folks that fall into this group. If the policy is accepted then a survey would be sent out to the parents.

Mr. McKeon asked if transportation were to change or add an item in the guidelines, would they have to come back to the board. It was advised, because they are guidelines, transportation would not have to come back to the board for modifications.

Mrs. Leeson thought this policy would work very well.

Mrs. Follweiler asked if there were any other discussions. She polled the board to put the policy on the agenda on April 27, 2009, at the Regular Board Meeting. The board agreed to have the policy put on the agenda on April 27, 2009.

**NEW BEHAVIOR SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY 113.2 – SECOND READING** – The second and maybe final reading will be placed on April 27, 2009, Regular Board Meeting agenda.

**REVISED PROPERTY RECORDS POLICY 706 – FOURTH READING** – The fourth and final reading will be placed on April 27, 2009, Regular Board Meeting agenda.

**REVISED USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES POLICY 707 – FOURTH READING** – The policy will be presented for approval at the Regular Board Meeting on April 27, 2009.

**REVISED TRANSPORTATION POLICY 810 – THIRD READING** – The policy will be presented for approval at the Regular Board Meeting on April 27, 2009.

**APPROVAL FOR ACT 80 REQUEST APPLICATION** – Mr. Washington stated this is a standard application that is submitted each year. We look at our calendar to adjust the days, so that avoids deduction when dealing with PDE.

Dr. Lewis stated that Mrs. Leeson asked this question about number of instructional days.

Mrs. Leeson had an issue with this because we are currently on corrective action. She stated there are some schools that are down to 175 days, and now schools around us are adding days to their calendars, because of loss of days, but we are just giving them up. She wonders why the district is not trying to recapture some of the instructional time.

Dr. Lewis stated we are always torn between not typically having adequate time to do professional development within the work year. He said this system had in place a memorandum of understanding that he honored in his tenure because he agreed with the former superintendent's philosophy, which was a contractual agreement between the association and the district that we would take three of those days to use as further professional development days. He is not so sure that just adding an instructional day was the answer. Do we get more value out of having a better-trained teacher? That is probably a debate that could occur here, but that is the history of it. We would be interested in a discussion or talks about this with the board.

Mrs. Leeson thinks the issue is more the snow days. She said the district did have those days built into the schedule with one or two snow days, but there were so many snow days that now the district has gone over. So now, the district has to apply for five additional days.

Dr. Lewis stated no that is not the issue. He said the calendar has four built in snow days, and it has not gotten to a point where the district lost instructional time because teachers worked one less day in the classroom. He said that has not occurred. He also stated it is strictly based on those three days that are shifted from instructional side to professional development side. That is the impact. Dr. Lewis stated the district has never given up, to his knowledge and correct him if he is wrong, a snow day as a lost instructional day unless the governor declares a state of emergency across the state. Mr. Zieger commented it happened one time many years ago in 1996. Dr. Lewis said that is the only time that a snow day has come off the instructional calendar.

Mrs. Leeson asked how many instructional days does the district have. Dr. Lewis answered 181 days are scheduled. Mrs. Leeson asked how could the district have four snow days if it only has 181 instructional days. Mr. Zieger answered because the district applies for what is called Act 80 days, which takes the place of instructional days with staff inservice days. He stated that is what Dr. Lewis is talking about, which is a carry over from the previous superintendent.

Mrs. Dexter commented she would like to see more instructional days for a district that is on corrective action. She thinks the district needs the instructional time and realizes there are some benefits sometimes derived from professional development days but has not heard great things about the professional development days and how they may impact instruction.

Mrs. Follweiler asked Dr. Lewis to recap what exactly we are looking for here and to clarify the snow days.

Dr. Lewis stated yes, in essence, there are 184 instructional days in the calendar and four snow days built in. If the district hits the fifth snow day, we take away one of the vacation days like an Easter Monday or day such as that. Dr. Lewis stated the district has not had to do that, and what the philosophy has been is to take three days for professional development. If the district takes the four snow days, you have 180. The memorandum of understanding that this district has always agreed to has been to increase professional development days from four to seven, which takes up three days. In essence, the calendar has always had 184 instructional days, 4 snow days built in, as well as the graduation scheduled June 3<sup>rd</sup> that might give Freedom one more day than Liberty, which caused a memorandum of understanding outside the contract, which he endorses (Mr. Zieger stated it is now in the contract).

Mrs. Follweiler asked, so there is 184 days of instruction that could be four of them are snow days – there is either a snow day or an instructional day, and that is what the current calendar entails. This approval for Act 80 is the district looking for an extra day, 185. She wanted to know if this was correct? Dr. Lewis answered it adds it back in. The district requests from the state to get 185 days for subsidy purposes. Mrs.

Follweiler asked, so right now we have 180 days that the state covers, but we have 184 days on our calendar. She asked, why not ask for 185 days. Dr. Lewis replied because the contract calls for 184 days, but it does not prevent us from applying for an Act 80 day to get additional subsidy.

Mr. Follweiler asked if at the next negotiations the district looks for 185 days to go into the contract then there is no need for the Act 80. Dr. Lewis suggested that would be a topic for executive session.

Mrs. Leeson asked if we are losing any subsidy this year because of lost days. Dr. Lewis answered none. Mr. Majewski mentioned Act 80 allows us to maintain the 180 day requirement, and approval of this prevents us from losing subsidy. Mrs. Leeson then asked if it applied to any subsidy for any school, and what about the football day off and will that impact our subsidy at all. Mr. Majewski answered that he does not have the direct answer. Mrs. Leeson asked if it gives us the 180 days at Liberty as well. Mr. Majewski thinks the question is better directed to somebody who works with that. Mr. Washington will get the answer from Child Accounting.

Mrs. Follweiler asked if the board can get additional information in the board mailing packet.

Dr. Lewis stated that the district lost some student count, which will translate into lose of subsidy. He acknowledged that when he made that decision regarding the Liberty football day off there would be a loss of subsidy. Mrs. Leeson asked how much was the district losing. Dr. Lewis did not recall the exact amount. Mrs. Leeson remembers \$5 to \$7 thousand dollars. Dr. Lewis recalls the amount around that vicinity. He thinks we would be compensated when we go to the 185 days.

Mrs. Follweiler asked if there was more discussion needed on this item. Dr. Lewis asked what questions. Mrs. Follweiler replied, the question is, as she understands it and Mrs. Leeson is saying, there are schools with 175 days, Mr. Majewski is saying that applying for Act 80 would cover that and the district would not lose any subsidy because there were less than 180 days in instruction. Mr. Majewski stated that is the purpose of the Act 80.

Dr. Lewis said because you can apply for staff development and those lose days by virtue of the school code. The district does this every year. The board has approved this every year to recoup as much subsidy as the district can.

Mrs. Leeson said all she wanted to know was that the district is not losing any other subsidy money because of any other lost days. She also said she supports Mrs. Dexter's statement that she prefers the district to use this time as instructional time.

Mrs. Follweiler asked if there were any other questions on this. This will be placed on the agenda for approval at the Regular Board Meeting on April 27, 2009.

#### **COURTESY OF THE FLOOR – None**

**OPEN FORUM** – Mrs. Follweiler came across a letter sent to Mr. Rooney from Dr. Lewis concerning the funds about the campaign. She asked if the district ever collected the funds. She saw something in the news recently – there is going to be a fundraiser to help pay off the campaign debt.

Dr. Lewis said that is part of our communication with the Mayor, Mr. Majewski, and we have not received it, but there is another line of communication that has been opened up.

Mr. McKeon mentioned that he read that Jon Bon Jovi had publicly announced that he was having a fund raising concert to help with the debt.

Irene Follweiler adjourned the meeting at 10:04 p.m.

Minutes prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Nitza S. Yerger, Confidential Secretary to the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources