

TOLLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Tolland High School  
Library  
Tolland, CT 06084

REGULAR MEETING

7:30 – 10:00 P.M.

AGENDA  
September 23, 2014

**VISION STATEMENT**

*To represent education at its best, preparing each student for an ever-changing society, and becoming a full community of learning where excellence is achieved through each individual's success.*

A. CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Regular Meeting – September 10, 2014

C. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (2 minute limit)

*The members of the Tolland Board of Education welcome members of the public to share their thoughts and ideas at this time. When appropriate to do so, members of the Board and the administration may respond to comments during "Points of Information". However, in consideration of those in attendance and in an effort to proceed in a timely manner, follow-up discussion may need to take place outside of the meeting setting.*

D. POINTS OF INFORMATION

E. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES REPORT

F. PARAPROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR RECOGNITION – Shirley Gerich

G. WEBSITE TASK FORCE PRESENTATION

H. NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES (NEASC) PRESENTATION-  
Final Report, Principal Dominique Fox

I. SUPERINTENDENT'S FINAL REPORT

- I.1 Board of Education Meeting Dates – 2015

J. COMMITTEE & LIAISON REPORTS

K. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

L. BOARD ACTION

L1 Recommendation to appoint residency officer

M. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (2 minute limit)

*Comments must be limited to items on this agenda.*

N. POINTS OF INFORMATION

O. CORRESPONDENCE

- Town Council Meeting – September 9, 2014

P. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Q. PROPOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION – Discussion regarding superintendent search

R. RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

S. POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE APPOINTMENT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

T. ADJOURNMENT

TOLLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Hicks Municipal Center  
Council Chambers  
Tolland, CT 06084

REGULAR MEETING – September 10, 2014

Members Present: Mr. Sam Adlerstein, Chair; Mr. Patrick Doyle, Vice Chair; Ms. Kathy Gorsky, Secretary; Ms. Karen Moran, Mr. Steve Clark, Mr. Robert Pagoni, Ms. Colleen Yudichak, Mr. Tom Frattaroli, and Mr. Joe Sce.

Administrators Present: Dr. Thomas McDowell, Interim Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Ron Army, Business Manager; Dr. Kathryn Eidson, Director of Curriculum and Instruction

- A. CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE  
The meeting was called to order at 7:30 P.M. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
- B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – August 27, 2014 – Regular Meeting  
Mr. Clark motioned to accept the minutes of the August 27, 2014 meeting. Ms. Gorsky seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.
- C. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (2 minute limit) - none  
Paul Krasusky, 26 Susan Drive, spoke as a resident. He inquired if there was a change in the policy that mandates that a state trooper be assigned to school fundraising activities or if there are different levels of functions that dictate what level of security representation must exist. There are some upcoming fundraisers and school activities and they are encountering a hurdle when it comes to paying for the state trooper and would like to know if there are other options.  
  
Kate Vallo, 72 Tolland Green, thanked the Board, the Superintendent, and Mr. Swanson for the additional kindergarten section. It is an important step for students this year and a great step for Tolland.
- D. POINTS OF INFORMATION  
In response to Mr. Krasusky's inquiry, Ms. Gorsky noted that there has always been a policy to require a certain amount of security at public events. Dr. McDowell added that a form is put out by Fire Chief John Littell and he bases the decision on the capacity and the activity. Mr. Pagoni referred to Policy 1010 as a starting point. Mr. Clark noted that what is being discussed has nothing to do with the new implementation of the SRO. Mr. McDowell invited Mr. Krasusky to send him an e-mail and he will ensure that Mr. Krasusky receives the appropriate form.  
  
Mr. Frattaroli asked about the process for addressing improvement ideas. A brief discussion took place. Mr. Adlerstein noted that historically, the ideas were presented to the superintendent and discussed.
- E. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT  
Mr. Adlerstein introduced student representatives Sarah Welch, class of 2016 and Charles Perosino, class of 2017. Mr. Perosino noted that the Welcome Back dance was well attended.



Ms. Welch added that an Open House will be held on September 17<sup>th</sup> and Homecoming will take place in late October. The theme will be the 1920s.

Mr. Adlerstein expressed the Board's appreciation for the representatives' participation. Ms. Gorsky will assist them and be their contact person. Mr. Pagoni explained that over the years, the representatives have brought many items to the Board's attention and that it is always available to try to help.

F. TEACHER OF THE YEAR RECOGNITION – Anthea Grotton

Dr. McDowell recognized Ms. Anthea Grotton, the Teacher of the Year. He noted that she was humbled at the convocation – it is always humbling to be recognized by one's peers. A wonderful article about Ms. Grotton was published in today's Journal Inquirer. Dr. McDowell read a note from Ms. Grotton to the Board in which she thanked everyone for the star and stipend. Mr. Adlerstein congratulated Ms. Grotton on behalf of the Board.

G. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. McDowell received a letter from Denise DiMare, School Nutrition Association of CT. Ms. Abby Kassman-Harned has been appointed president of the 2014/2015 Board of the School Nutrition Association of CT. Dr. McDowell expressed congratulations and thanks for the work of Ms. Kassman-Harned and her staff.

Dr. McDowell noted that he is in his sixth week as Interim Superintendent and read from a document detailing comments based on observations on a number of topics. He noted that the comments are not meant to offend anyone. He stressed that he will never tell the Board or anyone what they can't or won't do with what they don't have. He will tell people what can be done or what will be done with what is available. Education is expensive and \$37,189,581 is a lot of money.

The top priority is to educate the students placed under the district's care. The Board needs to support the efforts of many including the superintendent (present and future), building administration, teachers, and all others who deliver services to students. It is about keeping the collective eye on the ball as to its reason and purpose. At the same time, it is the responsibility of the administration to communicate openly and effectively with the Board. In order to establish trust and confidence, a communication loop must be established throughout the district. In regard to selecting the next superintendent, Dr. McDowell advised that the Board consider one very important question – long term, who will do the best job.

Dr. McDowell spoke about plans. Plans are needed that will convey where the district stands, where it is headed, and why. Further, they need to include the actions that will be needed and methods to determine success. Everyone needs to know the plans. He has heard, "because that's the way we've always done it" numerous times. Sometimes what one has is not good enough - the district has the capacity to be much better than it is. A sense of urgency needs to be created.

Last week, Dr. McDowell froze the 2014/15 operating budget due to some unanticipated costs that have been encountered since July 1<sup>st</sup>. A few of these included construction projects at TIS and TMS and an additional kindergarten teacher. He will provide an accurate report of where

the budget stands no later than the first meeting in October. Meanwhile, he is beginning the process for the development of the 2015/16 operating budget.

In regard to the Board's central office location, Dr. McDowell noted that it is not conducive to the efficient operation of a school district. All central office staff and administration should be housed at the same location. With John Carroll's assistance, he is looking to see if there is enough space to accommodate the needs of the central office and if money could be saved by doing so.

Dr. McDowell spoke of curriculum. The most important aspect is the delivery of curriculum to the students. It cannot be separated from instruction. His responsibility is to ensure that curriculum is being taught, tested, and that expectations are being conveyed. Curriculum initiatives need to be supported through the budget and staff. Materials and professional development need to be provided so that teachers can implement the initiatives and there needs to be accountability. He will send the professional development schedule out on Friday.

In regard to technology, Dr. McDowell stated that the district is woefully behind in this area. Technology must be used as an educational tool to assist in the delivery of curriculum. He would like to transfer from information technology to educational technology and will provide a list for the capital budget due in October.

The floor was opened to the Board for discussion. Mr. Frattaroli inquired how one stays on top of technology. Dr. McDowell responded that one cannot stay on top of it but a plan is needed. This plan will always be in flux. He is speaking not of the hardware but technology as a tool to assist in the delivery of curriculum.

Mr. Sce commented that a lot of time has been spent discussing curriculum and professional development and asked if the district has the resources to handle what needs to be done. Dr. McDowell explained the challenge is not in the development of the curriculum, the implementation of which is always in flux, but in its implementation. A discussion took place regarding options for professional development.

Mr. Adlerstein asked how Dr. McDowell would identify the top resources in a way that is not just additive and can gain town support in May. Dr. McDowell explained that it comes back to communication. It is about marketing and having people buy into what they are attempting to do. Mr. Adlerstein noted that the Board has discussed plans often and asked how plans could be implemented. He added that the Board wants to have a budget process that looks years out and is not reactive. Dr. McDowell explained that one needs to see where they are, convey the plan, and hold people accountable. A discussion of a 3-year budget took place and Dr. McDowell explained that such a budget would be program-based.

#### H. COMMITTEE & LIAISON REPORTS

##### Policy

Ms. Gorsky noted that the Committee reviewed the Field and Ground Maintenance Agreement. Further, the Committee is reviewing that all of the policies in the books are consistent with what is online. Lastly, at some point the Bullying and Safe School Policy will be updated. A discussion of the Board packet took place. Mr. Pagoni recommended that this is something that should be



discussed in the Policy Committee since it involves how the meetings are run. Others believed it was not something that needed to go before the Committee.

Communications

Ms. Moran noted that they are working on the fall newsletter.

Website Taskforce

Ms. Moran noted that they are prepared to present at the next meeting.

Town Council – Ms. Moran noted that there was nothing to report.

Shared Services – Ms. Moran noted that there was nothing to report.

Finance and Facilities

Mr. Doyle noted that they received the updates of the facility utilization study and are in the process of reviewing the information.

Negotiation

Mr. Clark noted that they understand that there are questions regarding the paraprofessionals' contract and will need to contact the board attorney.

Technology Advisory Board

Ms. Yudichak noted that they discussed three issues: the need for an educational technology advisor, a 3-year plan, and the lack of speed of many of the current computers.

Superintendent Screening Search Committee

Mr. Sce explained that there were originally 13 candidates and this pool was narrowed down to 5. These 5 were interviewed. After the interviews, the Committee voted and will present two candidates to the Selection Committee.

I. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT - none

J. BOARD ACTION

Ms. Gorsky motioned to approve the change in names on the Tolland Public Schools Child Nutrition Program account to Interim Superintendent Dr. Thomas Y. McDowell and Interim Business Manager Mr. Ron Army effective September 2, 2014. Mr. Sce seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

K. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION -none

L. POINTS OF INFORMATION

Mr. Clark noted that he was sorry to hear that Ms. Suzanne Waterhouse, the district's HR Specialist, will be leaving. She has been a tremendous resource, particularly for the Negotiation Committee. He wished her all the best.

M. CORRESPONDENCE

- Town Council Meeting - August 26, 2014
- NEASC Final Report

- Operating Budget Memo

N. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Financial report /, status of the budget
- Website taskforce recommendation
- NEASC report
- 15/16 operating budget – process
- Mrs. Lorenzette – grads to college
- Para professional of the year

O. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Clark motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:49 PM. Ms. Moran seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,



Lisa Pascuzzi  
Clerk



Hicks Council Chambers

September 10, 2014

7:30 p.m



Board of Education



WHAT'S

HOT



- Continued excellent school opening
- Assessing Tolland School District
- Setting the table for the next Superintendent

# Agenda

- A. CALL TO ORDER
- B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES Regular Meeting - August 27, 2014
- C. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
- D. POINTS OF INFORMATION
- E. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT
- F. TEACHER OF THE YEAR RECOGNITION -Anthea Grotton
- G. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT
- H.. COMMITTEE & LIAISON REPORTS
- I. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT
- J. BOARD ACTION
  - J.1 Authorized Signature Change Form
- K. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (2 minute limit, comment on these agenda items)
- L. POINTS OF INFORMATION
- M. CORRESPONDENCE
  - Town Council Meeting - August 26, 2014
  - NEASC Final Report
  - Operating Budget Memo
- N. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS
- O. ADJOURNMENT





# Public Participation

2 min :-)

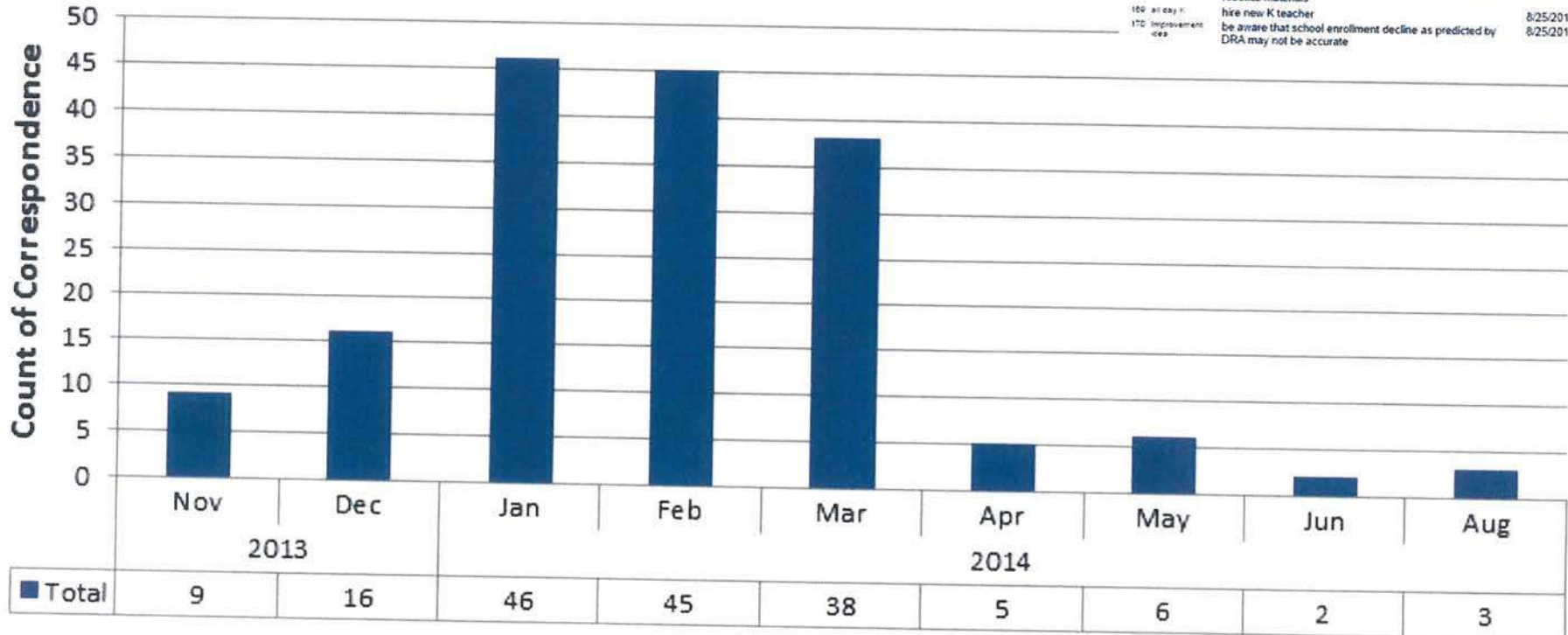
Please speak your mind



170 emails tracked by Kathy since November!

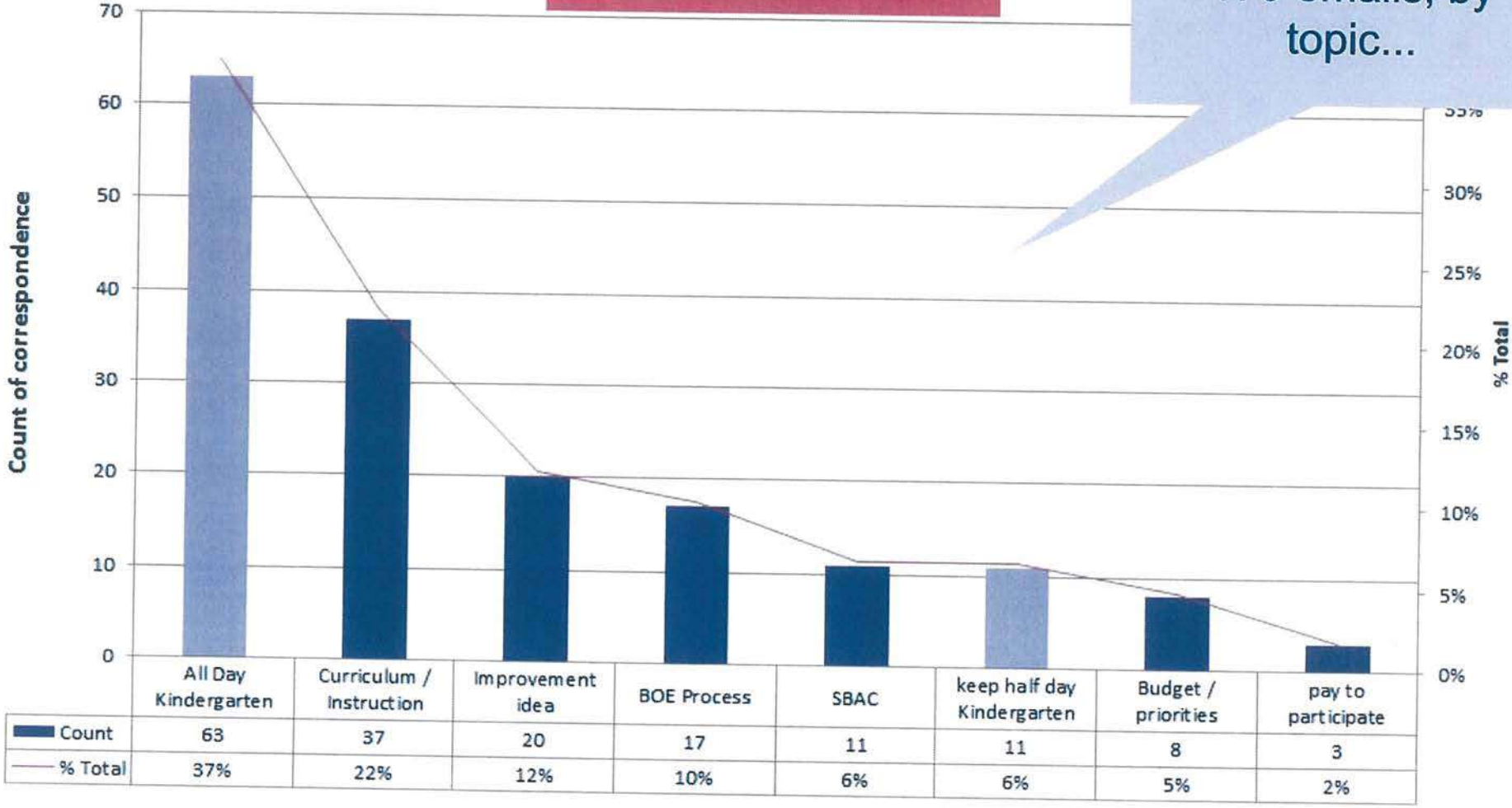
## Dear Board of Education, ...

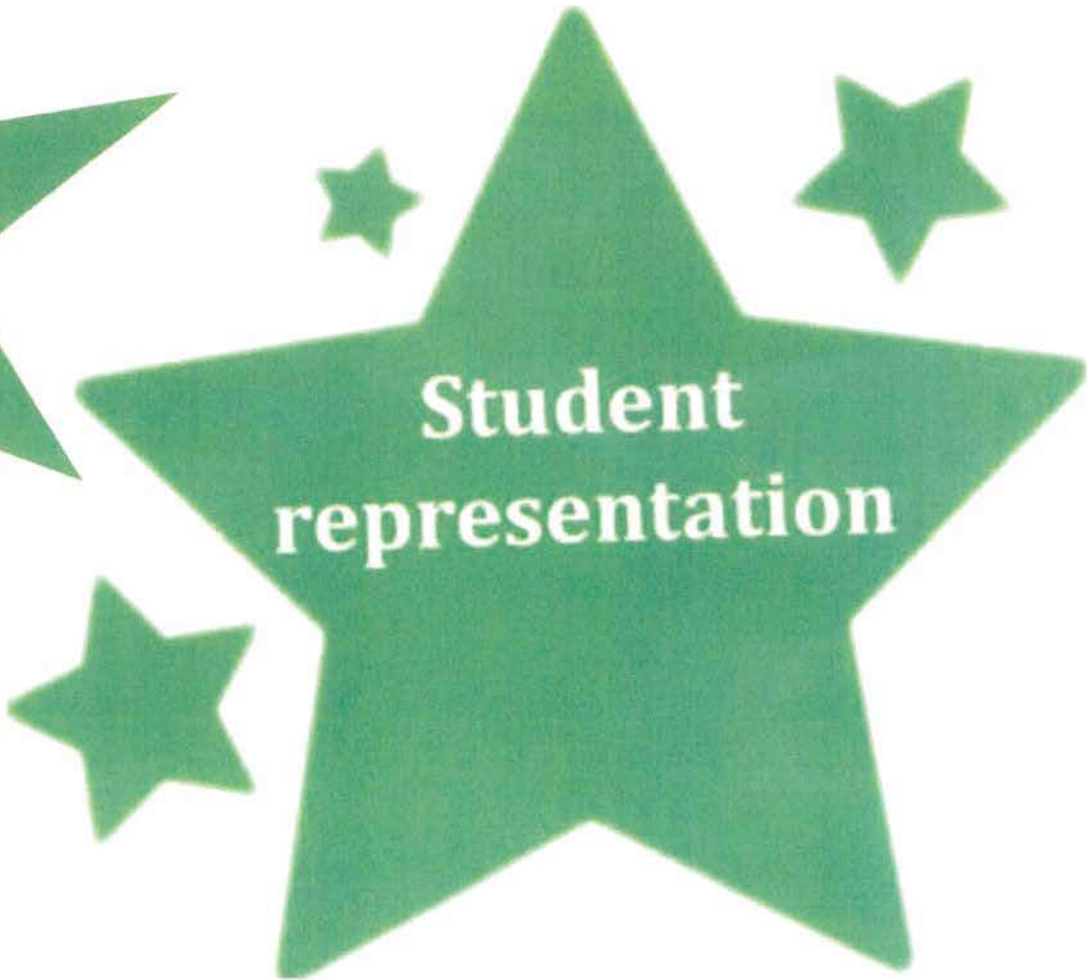
Topic	Correspondence / Recommendation / Suggestion / Request	Log Date	Source
157 Improvement idea	change proposed calendar	4/23/2014	letter to BOE
158 Curriculum / Instruction	change to workshop method of teaching over anthology	4/23/2014	letter to BOE
159 all day K	do ADK right	4/30/2014	letter to BOE
160 Curriculum / Instruction	online courses	5/14/2014	letter to BOE
161 all day K	keep kindergarten classes small	5/14/2014	letter to Karen or Kathy
162 all day K	provide lots of support in kindergarten	5/14/2014	letter to BOE
163 all day K	offer a sound half day k. option	5/14/2014	letter to BOE
164 Curriculum / Instruction	online courses follow-up	5/14/2014	letter to Kathy
165 Improvement idea	consider anti-bullying apps	5/22/2014	letter to BOE
166 Curriculum / Instruction	make teachers/administrators accountable when they don't follow prescribed curriculum	6/11/2014	letter to Kathy, Bob, Sam
167 Improvement idea	composting could be done with school food waste	6/23/2014	letter to BOE
168 Improvement idea	wants a shipping container on THS property to hold extra robotics materials	8/25/2014	letter to BOE
169 all day K	hire new K teacher	8/25/2014	letter to BOE
170 Improvement idea	be aware that school enrollment decline as predicted by DRA may not be accurate	8/25/2014	letter to BOE



## Correspondence Topics

170 emails, by topic...







# **Teacher of the year**

Anthea Grotton

## Teacher of Year Anthea Grotton is 'in love with' educating

By David Huck Journal Inquirer | Posted: Wednesday, September 10, 2014 1:38 pm

TOLLAND — The school system this year is offering all-day kindergarten for the first time — a challenge for both educators and the youngsters.

The students have been in school for less than 10 days, so even getting the 4- and 5-year-olds to form a line or properly use a glue stick is part of the demanding work.

“It really sounds silly, but you are really showing them how to do everything for the first time,” said Anthea Grotton, a kindergarten teacher at Birch Grove Primary School. “This is the beginning of the road for their education. They have 11, 12 years ahead of them, so you really have to make it fun and a place they want to come to.”

Grotton is the school system’s 2014-15 teacher of the year and is playing a key role in the new initiative.

Her entire career in education — 14 years — has been at Birch Grove.

“I just completely fell in love with it and haven’t left,” she said.

With kindergartners, Grotton says, she constantly has to remind herself she is working at the “ground level.”

Teaching fundamentals and life skills are equally important as reading, she says. On the first day of school she asked her 18 students to get in the circle, but they all ended up “sitting on top of each other.” So she backed up and talked about circles.

The school days runs from 8:50 a.m. to about 3:10 p.m. for the roughly 180 kindergartners.

She tries to keep them engaged with “brain breaks.” This includes “lots of snacks”, time outside, 40 minutes of “specials” every afternoon, such as music, art, or gym, “quiet relaxation,” and lots of movement activities, such as yoga or doing jumping jacks, and counting the days of school.

Education is a second career for Grotton. She previously worked in the nonprofit sector at the Mark Twain House and Museum after obtaining an English degree and journalism minor from Central Connecticut State University. Her parents, along with a grandmother, both were in education and there came a point where Grotton says she “wanted something else.”

Her father had started a math and reading tutoring program in Hartford that he ran for 25 years and suggested she become a teacher. In the early days, when her father was writing grant proposals to get funding, his ambitious goals rubbed off on her.

“He thought that within five years he’d have every kid in Hartford reading,” Grotton said. “He was that much of a dreamer.

“Just watching him with the kids and how they would go from struggling readers to kids that really believed that they could do something,” Grotton said. “That was the piece that has stuck with me my entire life.”

Grotton quit her job at the Twain House and went to school full time. There was a stretch when she would go to her parents’ house with a plastic bag and pick groceries off their shelf, as it was a struggle for her and her husband to put food on the table.

While pursuing her master’s degree in education at St. Joseph University, Grotton was assigned to the first-grade classroom of then-Newington’s teacher of the year.

“I remember being completely in awe of that,” Grotton said. “I remember being completely green — I had just started and had no idea what I was doing.”

Grotton says that teacher was her mentor, even though the experience was a bit intimidating. She took copious notes and immersed herself in the experience as much as possible.

“Now I have to give her a call and tell her I did it,” she said.

Those first days working with the young students was demanding, Grotton recalls.

“I remember going home and never being as tired in my entire life as I was during that first couple of weeks. It was exhausting.”



But, she adds, “I knew it was what I wanted to be doing. I loved it, loved it. I loved being with the kids and seeing their progress. There’s the yearly progress but there’s the daily progress too.”

Her advice for first-year teachers? Make connections with all the students and let them know that you are there for them. And “stay out of all the nonsense.”

Grotton lives in Ellington with her husband, 10-year-old daughter, and her dog and cat.

She says the teacher of the year recognition humbles her.

“I definitely work really hard and put my heart and soul into my job,” she said, attributing her strong work ethic to her other grandmother, a Jamaican immigrant. “I don’t know how to do it any other way.”

# **Superintendent Report**

Dr. McDowell

# **Committee Reports**

Toward Board Action



# **Chairperson's Report**

Superintendent Search Update



**Congratulations!**

August 15, 2014

Dear Interim Superintendent McDowell and Board Chairman Adlerstein,

On behalf of the School Nutrition Association of Connecticut, I am pleased to inform you that Abby Kassman-Harned has been appointed President of 2014-15 Board of the School Nutrition Association of Connecticut (SNACT). SNACT Board members are nominated by their peers in school nutrition and serve as leaders both professionally and organizationally. We are fortunate to have such a dedicated professional volunteering with SNACT.

SNACT is an affiliate of the national School Nutrition Association and is dedicated to our individual member's success and the success of your school district's nutrition program. We work together with allied organizations to advocate and advance good nutrition in CT communities ensuring the health and wellness of Connecticut's school children. Thank you for supporting Abby as she works with SNACT to advance our mission and for your district's commitment to a strong child nutrition program.

Sincerely,  
Denise Di Mare



# **Board Action**



September 5, 2014

TO: Tolland Board of Education

FR: Dr. T. Y. McDowell

RE: Consideration of the Approval of the Change in Names on the Tolland Public Schools Child Nutrition Program Account

It is recommended that the Board approve of the change in names on the Tolland Public Schools Child Nutrition Program Account, and Ron Army, Interim Business Manager, effective September 2, 2014.

OFFICE OF THE  
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS  
860-870-6850  
FAX: 860-870-7737

TOLLAND, CONNECTICUT 06084

Dr. Thomas Y. McDowell  
*Interim Superintendent*  
September 2, 2014

TO: Building Administrators  
Central Office Administrators  
Others Responsible for Budget Development and Implementation

FR: Dr. T. Y. McDowell

RE: 2014-2015 Operating Budget

Effective immediately, and until further notice, I am freezing spending regarding the 2014-2015 operating budget.

Any expenditures will need to be approved by either Mr. Army, Interim Business Manager, or by me.

I appreciate your understanding and thank you in advance for your cooperation. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact me.



September 5, 2014

TO: Tolland Board of Education

FR: Dr. T. Y. McDowell

RE: NEASC Final Report

I have attached a copy of Principal Dominique Fox's letter regarding the receipt of the Final Report from the new England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) decennial accreditation visit of Tolland High School last spring. The Final Report is also attached.

Mrs. Fox will attend the September 23<sup>rd</sup> Board of Education meeting and will make a presentation regarding the NEASC report.



# Future Agenda Items

- Financial report / status of the budget (9/23)
- Website Taskforce Recommendation (9/23)
- NEASC report
- 15/16 Operating budget - process
- Mrs. Lorenzette - grads to college report
- Para professional of the year
-

# DOING IT RIGHT

Website  
Task Force  
2014

Tolland  
Public Schools

# WEBSITE TASK FORCE

- **April 2014:** The Communications and Outreach committee sought residents interested in serving on a website task force. This task force has been charged with reviewing and making recommendations regarding the content, capability and design of the Tolland school district's main website as well as the four schools websites.
- This task force is comprised of ten professionals with experience in: website development, graphic design, analytics, content management, marketing, education and administration.



# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- In this technological world, a school district's website can be its one chance at a great first impression. See *Addendum "A"*.
- A website should show the broader community that our district values and invests in technology and must present a consistent, high quality experience across sites.
- The recommendations must support the needs of staff, administrator, student and parent communities.
- Recognize that this process is on-going, with short-term and long-term sustainable goals.
  - Outcomes must align with the technology plan.

# OUR WORK SO FAR

- Conducted an initial review of current sites and community concerns.
- Reviewed analytics and identified pain points and gaps.
- Compared websites in other New England districts.
- Researched and previewed solutions and tools of other vendors.
- Conferred with current vendor (Sharp School) to assess existing capabilities and opportunities.
- Considered anecdotal and survey feedback from teaching staff. *See Addendum "B"*.
- Developed list of preliminary recommendations.



# SHORT TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Continue vendor relationship with Sharp School**
  - **Minimizes disruption and keeps expenses low while improving overall user experience by:**
    - Taking advantage of free re-design of 5 sites.
    - Implementing responsive website technology to ensure mobile friendly display.
    - Leveraging existing capabilities to improve user experience.
    - Maintaining existing Teacher Pages “as is”.
  
- **Content Management**
  - **Immediately improve the district web presence by:**
    - Empowering the task force and IT Department to collaborate on decisions and implement changes to improve user experience.
    - Hiring on-demand consultant experienced with Sharp School interface for initial cleanup and redesign under the direction of the task force.
  - **Exploring opportunities for additional staff training.**
  
- **Continue and expand the charge of this task force to oversee the short term recommendations**



# LONG TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

Rapidly changing technology trends require expertise, dedicated focus and continuous oversight. Our current IT Department is not currently structured for these additional responsibilities.

## ■ Hire a Webmaster

- Ensures the long-term viability of Tolland's web presence by:
  - Effectively representing the school district via the websites
  - Overseeing the design, implementation and maintenance of the 5 district sites
  - Gathering feedback regarding the district's websites and making recommendations, modifications and enhancements
  - Keeping current with developing technologies and capabilities
  - Defining and overseeing design and content standards
  - Providing guidance, training and assistance in website technology
  - Exploring and overseeing any education/student/intern-based initiatives
  - Sample job responsibilities and qualifications – *See Addendum "C"*.

# INVESTMENT

<b>Short-term Recommendation</b>	<b>Investment</b>
Extend and expand charge of task force	Free (Action needed by BOE)
Redesign of all 5 sites	Free
Implement responsive technology (mobile)	\$2,500 (\$500 per site)
Hire on-demand consultant	\$2,000+ (extent of cleanup TBD)
Internal training opportunities	PD time / Train-the-Trainer

<b>Long-term Recommendation</b>	<b>Investment</b>
Hire Webmaster	\$50,000 - \$60,000 annual salary



**QUESTIONS?**



# Responsive Web Design for Schools and Districts

*Optimal Viewing Experience. Responsively Designed. Endless Accessibilities.*





# Moving? Here's how you can choose the right school from afar

By Melissa Rayworth  
Associated Press

Janine Boldrin Gwinn has become an experienced house-hunter and an expert packer of boxes. Seven times, this Army wife has managed to move her family from one place in the U.S. to another, improving the process a little more each time. But the search for schools for her children is never easy.

How can a parent choose the right school when it's not possible to visit the potential choices? As we've become a more mobile and global society, many families now face this challenge as they move cross-country or even internationally.

The decision is ultimately a personal one, but several strategies can make the process go more smoothly:

## Online detective work

Boldrin Gwinn's search usually starts online at GreatSchools.com, where she compares rankings for schools in her destination city. She has noticed that the rankings can fluctuate frequently, however, so she doesn't eliminate schools solely on the basis of that assessment.

Her next step is to explore the schools' websites. A school with a well-organized, informative site will likely be a place that communicates effectively with parents. Is the site kept up-to-date? Do teachers have pages or sections that might give you a sense of their methods or approach to students?

Just keep in mind that a school's website may have been designed with marketing in mind. Some of the positive buzzwords you see may be the work of a good publicist more than an accurate reflection of the school's approach to teaching.

## Word of mouth

Babette Maxwell, who has moved her family frequently during her husband's Navy career, also does extensive online research about new schools. And she asks people living in the community where she's heading.

If you are moving for a job, ask your employer to connect you with families who have children in the same age group as yours. Use Facebook to explore community groups or other family organizations in your new area; you can post a query on that page about schools.

The Facebook pages of schools can also be a great resource for learning about the community of parents there, the issues parents are dis-

cussing and how the school's administration interacts with them.

## School before home

Maxwell finds it practical to choose schools for her sons before selecting the location of her new home. Finding the right school, she says, can much be tougher than finding a suitable home.

Terri Bridgwater agrees: When she moved cross-country with her children, she selected a school that was a fairly long commute from her new home. The school turned out to be a great choice, but the commute was difficult.

If you don't find a good school in your initial search, Bridgwater suggests widening the search area. You may find something perfect just a bit further away.

## Pick up the phone

"There is so much you can tell about a school by talking to the front desk," Boldrin Gwinn says. She calls with a list of questions, noting not only how they are answered but how the school staff interacts with her.

The most academically impressive school may not be the best school for your child.

"You're seeking a school where your kids will be accepted and embraced," Boldrin Gwinn says, so consider your children's personalities and interests as you research schools. If music is important, for example, you may want to reach out to the music teacher or band director to ask about the program. If it's athletics or art class, pay extra attention to that.

How long will you be at your new location? If it's just a year or two and your children are young, then the school district's SAT scores may matter less than the personal impression you get of the teachers.

## Go, if you can

If it's hard to get a clear picture of a school from phone calls and online research, consider visiting in person, even if it involves an expensive trip or inconvenient scheduling.

Bridgwater did that when she moved cross-country with her family, and was glad she

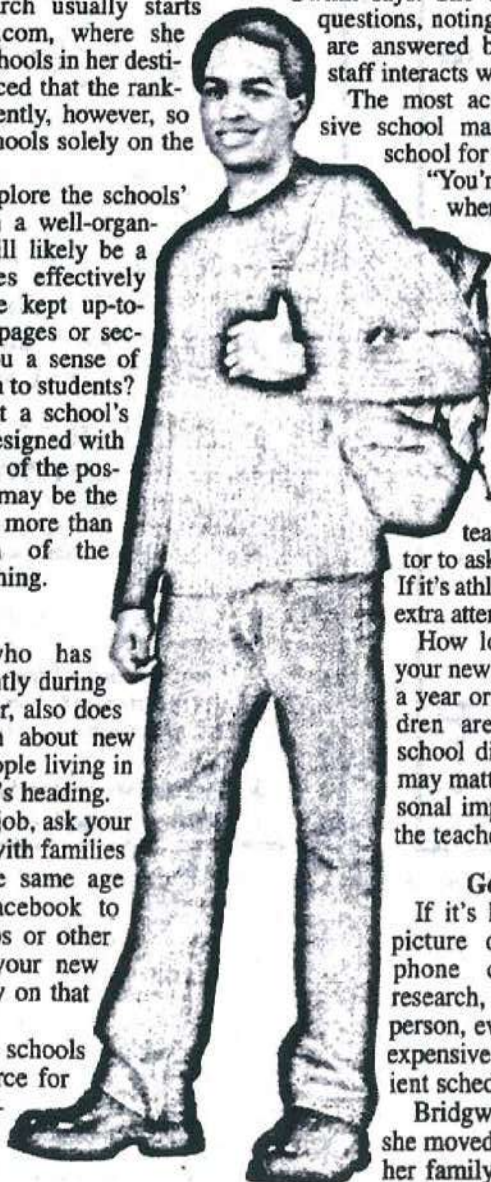
did. It can be difficult to get a feel about some schools, she says, until you walk around in the building and meet the teachers

## Changes can be made

You may find the perfect school but discover that enrollment is full. If so, no need to settle permanently for second best. Consider

picking a temporary option and then moving the kids to your desired school the next year. It does involve a second adjustment, but if you'll be in the area for several years or indefinitely, Maxwell says, "it's worth the effort."

And if your chosen school disappoints you, she says, "keep hunting once you're there."

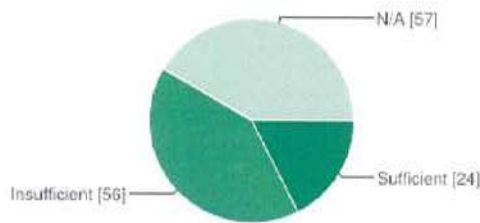




## ADDENDUM "B"

### Technology Survey Results Conducted in April 2014

#### District support for Sharp School website



Sufficient	24	18%
Insufficient	56	41%
N/A	57	42%

#### Comment

- Would like to have on-going training available
- Some teachers may need additional training
- No training. An awkward platform.
- Don't know anything about this
- What I know I learned from colleagues
- What is this?? would appreciate refresher No clue how to use this, but I know it exists
- Most of what I know about sharp school is trial & error
- Carolyn Tyl is the only one that really helps
- I prefer a Google site, easier to use
- Last training was when it first came out
- Not sure what this is
- This program is not user friendly
- Training has not been widespread, but the bigger problem is that the site itself isn't user-friendly. Other websites make it easier to complete the same tasks and more.
- Is sharp school our website?
- Would like more webpage instruction
- There is no one in the district to go to for help but the web program is HORRIBLE!!! Antiquated controls, very limiting.
- What is Sharp School?
- Training, again, was up to the administrator in our building and rushed. Like most new technology, we got the Spark Notes version and then had to go figure most of it out ourselves.
- I hate Sharp School! It is cumbersome.



## **ADDENDUM "C"**

### **WEBMASTER RESPONSIBILITIES**

The purpose of this position is to manage the design, implementation, documentation, training and troubleshooting of all district website to support widespread and efficient use of online resources and to effectively present the district's image and message to the general public.

#### **Strategy & Planning**

- Makes recommendations to the School Board and Superintendent for a long term web strategy based on industry trends and district needs;
- Develops plan and implements the long term strategy for presenting the school district's image and message effectively and consistently on the internet;
- Develops plan for actively engaging and communicating with school administrators and staff on an on-going basis;
- Keeps informed about other technology initiatives in the district and assess impact to the web strategy and operation (e.g. Google apps for education, etc.);
- Remains current with industry web software and design practices and researches new web content management technology to ensure Tolland's web presence keeps pace with that of other Connecticut school districts

#### **Operational Management**

- Develops guidelines and standards for the appearance and structure of Tolland's five district websites and defines content aging guidelines, in accordance with board policies and state laws;
- Develops guidelines and standards for electronic documents to ensure consistency in style, tone and quality of content;
- Proactively monitors and improves the ease of use, performance and publication of all district websites as new capabilities become available from the platform provider in order to continuously update and enhance the operational experience of the district sites;
- Provides on-going oversight of and assists with the content, quality, design, style and general maintenance of the district and school websites;
- Gathers feedback from school administrators, staff, students and parents regarding the district's websites and makes appropriate recommendations, modifications and enhancements;
- Provides technical guidance, training and assistance to district staff related to content management considerations and issues;
- Effectively communicates and collaborates with and mediates between school and district administrators to ensure the district's website goals are being achieved;
- Prepares reports and presentations associated with the district's web information;
- Administers website permissions for end users who require accounts;
- Other duties may be required and assigned, as needed

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

### **Formal Education**

- High School diploma or equivalent and 5+ years work experience in related field required.
- Bachelor's Degree from an accredited college or university with a major in Marketing, Communications, Web Design, Computer Science, or in Management Information Systems preferred.

### **Knowledge and Experience**

- 3+ years of progressive responsibility for and experience with Web site design and development, computer graphic design, and marketing best practices.
- Comprehensive experience with all aspects of Web site content management.
- Strong knowledge of Web technologies, protocols, and tools including but not limited to HTML, ASP, .NET, CSS, JavaScript and XML.
- Experience utilizing effective client communication and customer service strategies.
- Knowledge of strategies for building effective online professional learning resources.
- Understanding of basic project management principles.
- Proficient with building and maintaining cooperative working relationships with staff, user community, and others contacted through job.
- Experience with building and executing training plans for content owners.
- Understanding of the unique goals and objectives associated with the technology within a school district.
- Experience as a school district webmaster is highly desirable.

### **Personal Attributes**

- Excellent written and oral communication skills.
- Excellent interpersonal skills with a demonstrated ability to work well with others.
- Ability to navigate effectively at all levels of the district.
- Keen attention to detail and strong organizational skills.
- Ability to present ideas in a business-friendly and user-friendly language.
- Highly self-motivated and directed.
- Good analytical and problem-solving abilities.
- Ability to effectively prioritize and execute tasks in a high-pressure environment.
- Very strong customer service orientation.
- Experience working in a team-oriented, collaborative environment.

### **Intern Responsibilities**

(If an intern position is not pursued, these responsibilities would fall to the webmaster)

- Reviews district and school specific website content to ensure accuracy and timeliness of information and images and validates the integrity of all code and links;
- Identifies, diagnoses and resolves web site problems, typographical errors and report formatting inconsistencies;
- Assists school site owners, administrators and teachers with content management, as needed;
- Receives and responds to all e-mail messages to the Webmaster in a timely and courteous manner;
- Fields incoming problem tickets from end users to resolve technical issues;
- Tracks and analyzes web traffic statistics for periodic reporting and review of content effectiveness;
- Reports activities to webmaster

### **School Web Site Owner/Administrator Responsibilities**

- Refreshes website content to ensure accuracy and timeliness of information and images;
- Maintains, converts and optimizes published documents for online use (e.g. ensure every document is a PDF)





**TOLLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

51 TOLLAND GREEN  
TOLLAND, CONNECTICUT 06084

OFFICE OF THE  
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS  
860-870-6850  
FAX: 860-870-7737

**Dr. Thomas Y. McDowell**  
*Interim Superintendent*

**TO: Members of the Board of Education**

**FROM: Dr. Thomas Y. McDowell**

**DATE: September 19, 2014**

**SUBJECT: Board of Education Meeting Dates – 2015**

**I.1**

Attached please find the recommended Board of Education meeting dates for calendar year 2015. The calendar includes dates for proposed meetings on the second and fourth Wednesday of the month.

**TOLLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**2015 Meeting Dates**

**January 14**

**January 28**

**February 11**

**February 25**

**March 11**

**March 25**

**April 8**

**April 22**

**May 13**

**May 27**

**June 10**

**June 24**

**July 8\***

**July 22\***

**August 12**

**August 26**

**September 9**

**September 24 (Thursday, Due to Yom Kippur)**

**October 14**

**October 28**

**November 10 (Tuesday, Due to Veteran's Day)**

**November 25\***

**December 9**

**December 23\***

**Meetings with an asterisk have traditionally been cancelled**

**All meetings will be at Hicks Municipal Center – Council Chambers except November 10,  
that meeting will be at Tolland High School library.**



**TOLLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

51 TOLLAND GREEN  
TOLLAND, CONNECTICUT 06084

OFFICE OF THE  
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS  
860-870-6850  
FAX: 860-870-7737

**Dr. Thomas Y. McDowell**  
*Interim Superintendent*

L.1

September 19, 2014

TO: Tolland Board of Education

FR: Dr. T. Y. McDowell

RE: Recommendation to Appoint Residency Officer (L.1)

The Administration is recommending that the Board appoint Attorney Elisa Bartlett as its hearing officer for Residency Hearings. This appointment would be on a case-by-case basis. We have a couple of residency issues at the present time and one will most likely result in a request for a hearing.

I have used Attorney Bartlett in Wethersfield and Watertown as the Board's Residency Hearing Officer with great success.

If Board members have any questions, I'll be happy to answer them on Tuesday evening.



# MEETING MINUTES

## TOLLAND TOWN COUNCIL HICKS MEMORIAL MUNICIPAL CENTER 6<sup>th</sup> FLOOR COUNCIL ROOM SEPTEMBER 9, 2014 – 7:30 P.M.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Jack Scavone, Chairman; George Baker, Vice-Chair; William Eccles; Richard Field; Paul Krasusky; Jan Rubino and Ben Stanford

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Steven Werbner, Town Manager; Lisa Hancock, Director of Finance and Records; Doug Racicot, Asst. Director of Public Safety/Asst. Fire Chief

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Jack Scavone called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Recited.
3. **MOMENT OF SILENCE:** Observed.
4. **PROCLAMATIONS:** None.
5. **PUBLIC PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** (*on any subject within the jurisdiction of the Town Council*) (2 minute limit): None.
6. **PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS:** None.
- 7a. **REPORTS OF BOARDS AND COMMITTEES RESPONSIBLE TO THE COUNCIL:** None.
- 7b. **REPORTS OF TOWN COUNCIL LIAISONS:** Mr. Baker commented on the PZC: They closed the public hearing on the Gottier matter, although they were not able to act on it. They are waiting for Wetlands to act on it first. They are very pleased with the activity with regard to permits, and they are looking forward to getting the new engineer on board. Mr. Field updated on the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee: the Gala is going to be a big party, which is being advertised as a black tie affair, although dress up attire would be sufficient too. Tickets for the Gala are being sold at the Farmer's Market, the Library and the Town Manager's office. The Committee is getting ready for a parade on September 15<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Rubino said the Shared Services Committee is working on getting a date to reconvene. She also updated that someone has made an application for the property, which is before the AG Commission. Mr. Krasusky updated on the BOE: the high school Assistant Principal position is still open. All-day kindergarten is going very well, with 174 kids attending. The Committee is still working on the superintendent search. They have made recommendations, and interviews with the recommended candidates will be occurring. They are hoping to seat the new superintendent by the first of the year.
8. **NEW BUSINESS (ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS):**
  - 8.1 Discussion of where we are with the Fiber Project.

The Council was provided a report for their review. Mr. Racicot said the project is moving along, and he reviewed the three components to the project:

1. The CEN connection is currently located at the Tolland Middle School. The Tolland Middle School was viewed as an undesirable location of the demarc, because there is no backup power generator at the facility. Town staff and Board of Education staff worked with the CEN and Fibertech to relocate the

CEN demarc from Tolland Middle School to Tolland High School. The Board of Education entered into an agreement with Fibertech to relocate the demarc. Work should be commencing shortly.

2. The Capital Region Council of Governments has just concluded a competitive bidding process for the installation of dark fiber. They have been monitoring this process. CRCOG has entered into agreement with Sertex. It is the recommendation of the Assistant Director of Public Safety and the Technology Advisory Board to work with Sertex to generate a scope of work and budget for the project.
  - a. They would approach this project in two phases simultaneously. The main fiber ring would be installed first and networked first. This would include the Town Hall, all BOE facilities and the EOC. Other municipal buildings will be completed once the fiber has been terminated at each building. This approach will maximize efficiency and redundancy. Also, completing the main fiber ring first should prepare us for the new VOIP phone system that would ideally be installed during the summer of 2015.
3. The last component of the project is purchasing new network switches to run the network. South Windsor has almost completed an as-built design of our network. That information along with what facilities will have fiber terminated at them is necessary to bid the purchasing of switches, installation and engineering. Town staff has been working with the Board of Education staff to design a resilient and disparate network for municipal government. This portion of the project is very critical to the success of this overall improvement. Town staff, Board of Education staff and South Windsor IT will play a critical role in the creation of the bid spec and the execution of the contract.

The Council expressed their thanks to Mr. Racicot, and said he has done a great job.

8.2 Appointments to vacancies on various municipal boards/commissions: No appointments.

9. **OLD BUSINESS (ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS):** None.

10. **REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER (A WRITTEN REPORT SHALL BE PROVIDED THE 1<sup>ST</sup> MEETING OF THE MONTH ONLY):** Mr. Werbner reminded that *Celebrate Tolland* is September 20, 2014 from 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. He advised that the new building inspector has been doing a great job, and that the new engineer will start on September 15, 2014.

11. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

11.1 August 26, 2014 Regular Meeting Minutes: Rick Field moved to adopt the minutes; Seconded by George Baker. All in favor. None opposed. Jan Rubino and Ben Stanford abstained.

12. **CORRESPONDENCE TO COUNCIL:** None.

13. **COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS FROM COUNCILPERSONS:** None.

14. **PUBLIC LISTED PARTICIPATION (on any subject within the jurisdiction of the Town Council) (3 minute limit):** None.

15. **ADJOURNMENT:** George Baker moved to adjourn the meeting; Seconded by Ben Stanford at 7:53 p.m. All were in favor.

---

Jack Scavone, Council Chair

Michelle A. Finnegan  
Town Council Clerk