



CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT OF NEW BRITAIN

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes from April 26, 2017 Slade Middle School

Attendance

The meeting began at 5:35 PM.

Board Members Present

Ms. Daisy Sanchez and Ms. Gayle Sanders-Connolly

CSDNB Committee Staff Present

Mr. Matthew Cannata, Mr. Kevin Kane, Mr. Paul Salina, Ms. Nancy Sarra

New Business

Minutes from meeting on March 27, 2017

There were no recommended changes to the minutes from meeting on March 27, 2017.

AXA Advisors - Retirement Benefits Group

Representatives from AXA Advisors came to speak in regards to adding their company to the vendor list for 403B and retirement plans. They answered all questions from members of the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee recommended this request go to the Board of Education for approval at their next regular meeting.

Academics: Bid Waiver and Purchase Order Approval for READ 180 and System 44 Programs Submitted by Amy Anderson

The READ 180 and System 44 programs are research-based reading intervention programs designed to meet the needs of our most challenged readers. The programs are currently being used at Slade, Pulaski and DiLoreto Middle Schools, Brook Side School, Satellite Career Academy, and New Britain High School. READ 180 and System 44 use computer-adaptive instructional software, leveled literature, and direct instruction to meet individual learning needs of our students.

Our long-term goal in the Academics pillar is to 'prepare all students to be future-ready through an engaging, personalized, and comprehensive education.'

These materials help us accomplish this goal by addressing the needs of our most fragile readers at the secondary level. In addition, Board Policy 9-3 requires purchases in excess of \$7500 to be bid, to attend to fiscal responsibility. The policy allows the Board to waive bidding if it determines it is in the best interest of the District. Houghton Mifflin is the sole supplier of the consumable books. We reorder to replenish supplies each year.

The total cost is \$11,388.63 and the funding source is Alliance Grant, Instructional Supplies, 234196910001-56110. The Finance Committee recommended this request go to the Board of Education for approval at their next regular meeting.

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Academics: Bid Waiver and Purchase Order Approval for Words Their Way Classroom Packages

Submitted by Melissa Abate

Summer Enrichment Experience (S.E.E.) serves over 600 students for three weeks in July/August at three different schools. Our goal is to accelerate students' academic success through focused academic intervention and enrichment activities. In order to gauge student progress teachers administer the Primary Spelling Inventory (PSI) from the Words Their Way book. The Inventory determines a spelling stage and students utilize word sorts to learn phonics skills at that particular stage. In 2015, of the 400 S.E.E students who took both the pre and post Words Their Way DSA, 293 students (73.25 %) showed an increase in skill level. While this is good progress, our goal is to increase the percentage to 80%. An important part of the Words Their Way program includes word sorts. This is a hands-on activity where students sort words into categories such as short vowel sounds, digraphs, blends, or some other phonics feature. The teacher can increase the interest level by having students engage in speed sorts, blind sorts, or open sorts.

The Words Their Way Classroom Package provides all materials to support sorts including: 20 word study notebooks, 36 guided reading titles/6 copies of each, Teacher Resource CD with sorts and games, and rhyming posters. The benefit of these materials is that:

- Materials are fully aligned to the Primary Spelling Inventory
- They provide grade appropriate guided reading books for EACH class to support the transfer of phonics skills in isolation to connected text
- There is a multitude of books for EACH class that will allow enough books for independent practice and partner reading
- Our intent is to purchase these materials to provide appropriate support for each spelling stage. We plan to purchase enough Classroom Packages for one site, (Lincoln), to monitor students' progress on the PSI prior to purchasing materials for the two other sites.

The purpose is to provide S.E.E. students with the necessary materials to support language acquisition with a focus on phonics, word analysis, and application to reading. This goal aligns with the Academic pillar because the Words Their Way materials engage students through hands-on activities that are appropriate for their spelling stage in order to make gains toward grade-level reading skills. These materials also align with the Culture and Climate pillar because they promote an engaging culture where students can read individually or with partners, play literacy games, and read leveled text in guided reading groups led by their teacher.

The total cost is \$19,790.77 and the funding source is the School Improvement Grant - SIG 1003(a). The Finance Committee recommended this request go to the Board of Education for approval at their next regular meeting.

Academics: Bid Waiver and Purchase Order Approval for Composition Books

Submitted by Amy Anderson

Four years ago, on the direction of Nancy Sarra, the Department of Academics created Explicit Phonics and Word Study lessons for grades K-5 in order to enhance New Britain's students' foundational reading and writing skills. The journals were ordered to align with this initiative to offer students appropriately sized lines to practice handwriting, and allow students to record information for future reference.

This directly relates to district goals to increase proficiency in foundational reading and writing skills including phonics, handwriting, spelling and vocabulary, so that students will be successful in school and beyond.

Students must learn that there are systematic and predictable relationships between letter combinations and spoken sounds. Once phonics skills are mastered, students will be able to decipher words encountered in reading and spell the various words they wish to write. When students are focusing less on decoding, they can spend more attention on making meaning from the

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print they are reading. Additionally, just as effortful word decoding may impair reading fluency and comprehension, labored handwriting creates a drain on mental resources needed for higher-level aspects of writing, such as attention to content, elaboration of details, and organization of ideas. Because handwriting is a basic tool used in many subjects, poor handwriting can have a pervasive effect on school performance. Finally, research shows handwriting in the earliest grades is linked to basic reading and spelling achievement; for example, when children learn how to form the letter m, they can also be learning its sound. Attention to the linkages among handwriting, reading, and spelling skills can help to reinforce early achievement across these areas.

The district Explicit Phonics and Word Study lessons contain all the components mentioned above. With this in mind, we would like to order various grade-dependent writing journals for students. The journals will vary in line-spacing and size to match the developmental level of students of a particular grade. The explicit phonics and word study lessons require students to:

- Practice handwriting skills in either manuscript (K-2) or cursive (3-5) in lined journals
- Record dictated words and sentences, applying their newly acquired skills in their journals
- Document their learning of word origins and record their components, such as syllables, base/root words, and affixes in their journals, so that they use these as future references when needed

The total cost is \$17,526.78 and the funding source is Alliance Carryover, 234196910001-56110. The Finance Committee recommended this request go to the Board of Education for approval at their next regular meeting.

Academics: Bid Waiver and Purchase Order Approval for DRA2 Kits and Progress Monitoring Assessment Classroom Packages Submitted by Amy Anderson

Over 15 years ago, the state mandated priority school districts assess students K-3 three times a year with the DRA (and later the DRA2) to support reading instruction and set grade level goals that would satisfy NCLB. The teachers found the process very informative, but time intensive. The state moved to requiring computer adaptive tests (like the NWEA Map assessment) rather than the DRA2. Since that time, teachers have been frustrated with the lack of instructional information the results from NWEA Map test provides.

This directly relates to district goals to help students become proficient readers, who are able to read for a variety of purposes. In order to accomplish that teachers need a method for assessing and documenting students' development as readers over time.

Presently, students K-5 are administered the NWEA Map test for benchmarking students' progress three times a year at grade level. Teachers are finding that the results are not helpful in providing information that reflects on the students' strengths or instructional needs. Some are electing to use the DRA2 or the DRA2 progress monitoring to guide their teaching. The DRA2 will allow them to systematically observe, record and evaluate changes in students' reading performance. They will be able to determine the student's independent or instructional reading level and identify what a student needs to learn next. The progress monitoring version, (available for grades 1-5) has abbreviated assessments in the form of one-page passages rather than books, that can also be used to confirm effective teaching practices, as well as document student progress towards established benchmarks. We are hoping with this purchase, we can supplement the number of DRA2 kits we presently have so that all kindergarten teachers will have a kit available to assess their students in January (baseline) and May, and grades 1-5 will have access to the Progress monitoring assessment they may utilize monthly to assess their students.

The total cost is \$13,603.01 and the funding source is Academics-Textbooks 101097322004-56410. The Finance Committee recommended this request go to the Board of Education for approval at their next regular meeting.

Academics: Bid Waiver and Purchase Order Approval for Guided Reading Materials (Grades K-5) Submitted by Amy Anderson

Every K-5 school has a book room where guided reading materials are housed for use by teachers. Some of these book rooms have been dismantled or depleted over the years. In addition, teachers maintain their own classroom libraries which vary greatly from teacher to teacher. In an effort to replenish both the book room libraries and classroom libraries, the Department of

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Academics asked reading teachers at each school to review their needs for materials and submit requests for necessary resources.

These resources will provide students and teachers with the books they need to improve literacy acquisition and prepare students with the strategies and skills they need to meet the demands of grade level expectations. This purchase aligns with our district's goals of improving literacy, educating the whole child, and increasing student engagement. When students have access to books they can read, they feel more successful and their engagement increases. Multiple copies of book club and guided reading books provide opportunities for students to interact with one another as they discuss, question, and opine on story elements.

- Some teachers who are new to a grade level have very few books for students to read independently. (Allington recommends at least 500 books in each classroom.) This is problematic because when a teacher takes a guided reading group, the other students who are sitting at their desks may be given low-level tasks, rather than books to read at their levels to reinforce fluency, word analysis, sight words, and comprehension.
- Guided reading provides a structure for teachers to utilize small group instruction to address students' weaknesses, model word analysis or comprehension strategies, and support students in their zone of proximal development.
- Book clubs allow students to choose their own novels and engage in critical thinking, discussion, and written response.

Our purpose for purchasing these resources is to provide leveled reading materials for students to read during independent reading time, in guided reading groups, and book clubs (grades 3-5). In Richard Allington's book, *What Really Matters for Struggling Readers*, he cites research that shows that independent reading is a powerful contributor to accurate, fluent, high-comprehension reading. He notes that the higher-achieving students read three times as much each week as their lower-achieving classmates. In addition, McQuillan (1998) asserts that library adequacy is among the better predictors of reading achievement with a correlation of .85 between library adequacy and NAEP reading achievement scores. In conclusion, children from lower-income homes especially need rich and extensive collections of books in classrooms and bookrooms because these are the children least likely to have a supply of books at home.

The total cost is \$157,162.93 and the funding source is Academics - Textbooks 101097322004-56410. The Finance Committee recommended this request go to the Board of Education for approval at their next regular meeting.

Academics: Bid Waiver and Purchase Order Approval for Math Expressions Consumables (Grades K-5)

Submitted by Amy Anderson

The Houghton Mifflin Math Expressions Program is a researched, scientifically-based program that promotes number sense and mathematical thinking. It is aligned with the Common Core State Standards. Math Expressions contain a technology application component with additional access to assessments and resources. Math Expressions was adopted as the core program for Grades K-5 throughout the district. This program requires the purchase of yearly consumable materials for all K-5 classrooms.

In partnership with family and community, the Consolidated School District of New Britain works to provide the best personalized and comprehensive whole-child education so our students will be prepared for, and positively contribute to, a profoundly different future. This purchase is directly aligned to our goals in the academic pillar: We prepare all students to be future-ready through an engaging, personalized, and comprehensive education. As part of the education of elementary students for Mathematics, textbooks, which are used as the main resource to support the curriculum, are required for each child in grades K-5.

The total cost is \$170,513 and the funding source is Academics - Textbooks 101097322004-56410. The Finance Committee recommended this request go to the Board of Education for approval at their next regular meeting.

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Academics: Bid Waiver and Purchase Order Approval for Journeys Consumables (Grades K-5)

Submitted by Amy Anderson

The Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Journeys Program is a researched, scientifically-based program that promotes the essential components of reading and oral language development. It is aligned with the Common Core State Standards. Journeys contains a technology application with additional access to assessments and resources. Journeys was adopted as the core program for Grades K through 5 throughout the district. The program requires the purchase of yearly consumable materials for all K-5 classrooms.

In partnership with family and community, the Consolidated School District of New Britain works to provide the best personalized and comprehensive whole-child education so our students will be prepared for, and positively contribute to, a profoundly different future. This purchase is directly aligned to our goals in the academic pillar: We prepare all students to be future-ready through an engaging, personalized, and comprehensive education. As part of the education of elementary students for Reading, textbooks, which are used as the main resource to support the curriculum, are required for each child in grades K-5.

The total cost is \$55,905 and the funding source is Academics - Textbooks 101097322004-56410. The Finance Committee recommended this request go to the Board of Education for approval at their next regular meeting.

Academics: Bid Waiver and Purchase Order Approval for Document Cameras

Submitted by Jeff Prokop

As the district has increased technology universally throughout the schools and classrooms, the next logical piece of equipment that every classroom could benefit from would be document cameras (also known as ELMOS which is a particular brand) They provide the class to project written work for everyone to see as well as demonstrating something that is difficult for all students in a classroom to see from their seats.

I have seen this simple tool turn a drawing class into a very lesson with full student engagement. Several schools already have deployed document cameras into every classroom. The chosen model is affordable and easy to use, but is sold exclusively by the dealer, so multiple bids were not possible. This purchase will almost put a document camera in every classroom. Local funds in the coming year can complete this objective.

The total cost is \$28,947.60 and the funding source is \$13,735.17, Alliance Carryover, Instructional Supplies, 234196910002-56110 and \$15,214.43, Alliance, Instructional Supplies, 234196910001-56110. The Finance Committee recommended this request go to the Board of Education for approval at their next regular meeting.

Academics: Bid Waiver and Purchase Order Approval for Chromebook Carts for Smalley School (Pope John Paul II)

Submitted by Jeff Prokop

As the school district prepares for the temporary move of Smalley Elementary School, we need to accommodate for the school's technology needs with a building not wired to the typical specifications. To accomplish these needs with this building, the district will purchase an additional seven chromebook carts and will eliminate student computer labs and classroom student computer stations. The district will leverage the previous bid award process to purchase these additional carts.

The total cost is \$74,286 (Two quotes, based on device choices of touch screen and non-touch screen). There is one for \$38,808 and one for \$36,018. The funding source is Chromebook (Touch Screen Modes), Alliance Carryover, Instructional Supplies, 234196910002-56110 and \$36,018 - Chromebook (Non Touch Screen Model), Alliance Carryover, Instructional Supplies, 234196910002-56110, respectively. The Finance Committee recommended this request go to the Board of Education for approval at their next regular meeting.

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Finance: District Action to apply for a maximum of up to two percent ECS Grant Set-Aside Award

Submitted by Kevin Kane

Mr. Kevin Kane, Chief Financial Officer, answered all questions from members of the Board of Education. With board approval, this will be the eighth consecutive year the district has received the 2 percent ECS grant set-aside award. The approximate amount is \$1,478,586. The Finance Committee recommended this request go to the Board of Education for approval at their next regular meeting.

Update on Mayor’s Proposed 2017-2018 General Fund Budget

Presented by Kevin Kane

Mr. Kevin Kane, Chief Financial Officer, gave an update on the Mayor’s Proposed 2017-2018 General Fund Budget and how it impacts the Board of Education. He answered all questions from the board. The Finance Committee recommended that this be presented in front of the Board of Education at their next regular meeting.

Finance: Monthly Financial Report

Submitted by Kevin Kane

Mr. Kane presented the Monthly Financial Report ending March 31, 2017. Mr. Kane answered all questions from members of the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee recommended this report go to the Board of Education for approval at their next regular meeting.

Academics: Bid Waiver and Purchase Order Approval for Exhaust Bender (Automotive Pathway at NBHS)

Submitted by Sondra Sanford

As part of the development of the Automotive Pathway at New Britain High School, Perkins grant has approved new equipment to establish the program. The Exhaust Bender is one of the items approved by the state for purchase.

To purchase necessary equipment in the Automotive Lab at NBHS. The exhaust bender was approved by the State as part of the Career & Technical Education Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP).

The total cost is \$8,177 and the funding source is Perkins Line Item 700 – Property. The Finance Committee recommended this request go to the Board of Education for approval at their next regular meeting.

Partnerships: Accept donation Liberty Bank Foundation (\$2,000) for New Britain Adult Education

Liberty Bank Foundation is donating \$2,000.00 to support scholarships for low-moderate income graduates who attend New Britain Adult Education. The Finance Committee recommended this request go to the Board of Education for approval at their next regular meeting.

Closing and Adjournment

The meeting ended at 6:20 PM.