



CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT OF NEW BRITAIN

New Britain Board of Education Special Meeting

January 12, 2021 – 6:00 PM | New Britain High School

Call to Order and Roll Call

Call to Order

Mr. Merrill Gay, President of the New Britain Board of Education, called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

Board Members Present

Mr. Merrill Gay, Mr. Nicholas Mercier, Ms. Annie Parker, Ms. Diana Reyes, Ms. Gayle Sanders-Connolly, Dr. Violet Jiménez Sims

Board Members Absent

Ms. Monica Dawkins, Mr. Anthony Kane, Mr. Joseph Listro

New Business / Executive Session

Review Superintendent's Year-End Evaluation

Discussion and Possible Action on Superintendent's Contract Extension

Mr. Mercier motioned to go into executive session to discuss items 2A (Review Superintendent's Year-End Evaluation) and 2B (Discussion and Possible Action on Superintendent's Contract Extension), seconded by Ms. Sanders-Connolly. Superintendent Sarra was invited into executive session with the Board. Motion carried unanimously.

Continuation of Meeting

The meeting resumed in open session at 8:06 PM.

Motion

Ms. Sanders-Connolly motioned to approve the Superintendent's Evaluation as submitted, seconded by Ms. Parker. Motion carried unanimously.

Closing and Adjournment

Ms. Sanders-Connolly motioned to adjourn at 8:08 PM, seconded by Dr. Jiménez Sims. Motion carried unanimously.

New Britain Board of Education

Merrill Gay – President | Nicholas Mercier – Vice President | Violet Jiménez Sims – Secretary
Monica Dawkins | Anthony Kane | Joseph Listro | Annie S. Parker | Diana Reyes | Gayle Sanders-Connolly

DRAFT

This document serves as the evaluation document for Nancy Sarra, Superintendent of the Consolidated School District of New Britain, for the 2019/2020 school year based on the CAFE Benchmarks. Each area includes a summary of the Board's assessment of work completed in the 2019/2020 school year as well as suggestions for areas of focus for the 2020/2021 school year.

As a general note, the Board acknowledges the dramatic impact the COVID-19 pandemic had on school district operations as well as the long term effects it may continue to have throughout the current school year. These events have been taken into consideration throughout this evaluation process and document.

GROWTH IN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The Board is overall pleased with the initiatives that Superintendent Sarra has undertaken with regard to student achievement. Due to the pandemic much of the data that would be traditionally collected in the spring was unavailable, but there were several positive trends in the earlier half of the academic year. The Board appreciates Superintendent Sarra's focus on whole child education and her willingness to advocate for assessment practices that do not attempt to whittle a child's worth down to a single test score.

Going forward the Board urges Superintendent Sarra to continue to advocate for the truth that students from New Britain achieve high academic standards and work to put in place curriculum and practices that help our students to achieve those standards. The Board would suggest the Superintendent plan for how we can recover from lost learning time due to the pandemic, and how to potentially address the effects the pandemic has likely had on the achievement gap within our community.

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

The Board feels that Superintendent Sarra has routinely demonstrated strong educational leadership and has been willing to undertake large scale educational reforms to improve the quality of instruction as well as to provide needed support to staff around areas of professional development. This is evident in the continued implementation of NBU as well as the overwhelming participation in the technology training that was made available to teachers throughout the summer. It was also evident in the reopening sub-committees, which included a wide variety of voices from various educator stakeholders.

The Board feels that the district, as a whole, could benefit from a return of focus to the Mission and Vision of the district. Each employee should know the mission and vision and it should be reflected in all educational decisions. Families and students should also know the mission and vision and it should be a driving force in the district planning, similar to the profile of a graduate.

In the coming year steps should be taken to ensure that all staff, not just educational staff, are given appropriate and meaningful professional development opportunities. Whenever possible

training should address specific needs expressed by the staff and should be balanced between self directed learning and whole district initiatives. Continue to use surveys and other methods for continuous feedback from staff. In addition, explore other avenues for collecting honest feedback to help in decision making and planning. Continue to work with administrators on sending a unified message that clearly communicates building and district level directives with both clarity and ownership.

ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT

The organizational management that was required as the school had to transition into distance learning in the spring, as well as the transition into hybrid learning this fall was monumental. Superintendent Sarra has continuously worked throughout the year to address numerous pandemic related concerns.

Superintendent Sarra has also shown growth over the past year in delegating tasks to other colleagues when appropriate, allowing her greater flexibility to focus on tasks needing her direct involvement and attention. She has also made organizational changes within the district to better align staff members skills and talents with their duties. She has advocated for the changes she feels are necessary to bring the district forward in the areas of education and operations and has been willing to advocate for her views even when facing strong criticism.

The Board suggests Superintendent Sarra continue to look for ways to optimize our effective operations and to maximize our efficiencies while also reducing duplication and redundancies. Continuing the work to implement a systems based solution to many of the districts problems will help her in accomplishing this task.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Superintendent Sarra's community engagement efforts have been noted through several successful campaigns to raise awareness around educational issues. Furthermore, changes to the Family School Liaison program have allowed for greater opportunities for family engagement with our families and students that are most at risk. Under Superintendent Sarra the district has continued to partner with a wide range of community organizations, providing many needed services and also raising awareness about our educational programs.

As always, it is difficult to reach the entire community. We suggest Superintendent Sarra continue to leverage the Family School Liaisons as well as continuing to develop relationships with point people within various communities who can help deliver district messages and connect with more families. Continue to work on refining the operations of the Partnership Office so that it can effectively connect all of our community stakeholders together with our families and the district at large.

BOARD OF EDUCATION RELATIONSHIP

The Board of Education is pleased with the frequent updates Superintendent Sarra provides that keeps Board members informed about the operations and events within the district as well as areas of concern which community members may reach out to the Board about. In the

coming year the Board would like the Superintendent to also share with the Board professional articles, research, and other information that helps inform her thinking about the needs and direction she feels the district needs to grow. Helping the Board to understand the reasoning behind various decisions and initiatives will allow the Board to make more informed decisions as well as to advocate for district needs within the larger community.

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL QUALITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS

The Board feels, without a doubt, that Superintendent Sarra is dedicated to the vision that every child in New Britain deserves success. The Board urges the Superintendent to continue to be a beacon for the vision within New Britain. In leading by example, Superintendent Sarra can motivate staff, students, and community members to see the potential within every one of our students.

In a year where the educational world and the world as a whole has been turned on its head, it is important that we continue to not lose sight of the profound work the school district must do, and precious gifts of the students who are entrusted to our care. If Superintendent Sarra holds true to that guiding principle we are certain that the district will continue to grow and succeed.