

**CLINTON TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

MINUTES

Special Meeting – August 17, 2007

TIME AND PLACE: The special meeting was held on August 17, 2007, by the Board of Education of the Clinton Township School District, Hunterdon County, in the Cafeteria of the Clinton Township Middle School, 34 Grayrock Road, Clinton, NJ 08809.

**PUBLICATION
OF NOTICE:**

In accordance with the provisions of the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, Laws of 1975, the Clinton Township Board of Education has provided adequate notice of the date, time, and location of this meeting. Such notice has been posted in the Clinton Township Board of Education Office and each of the district schools, has been filed with the Clinton Township Clerk, and was faxed to the *Hunterdon County Democrat, Hunterdon Review, Courier News, Star Ledger and Express Times* on August 6, 2007.

CALL TO ORDER: Board President Roger Straight called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM.

ROLL CALL

Present:

Roger Straight, President	Mark Kaplan
Jim Dincuff, Vice-President	Janette LaVigne
Donna Gregory	Charles Many

Absent:

Michelle Cresti (arrived 11:00 AM)
Thomas Roskoski (arrived 1:00 PM)

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS

PRESENT:

Elizabeth A. Nastus, Superintendent of Schools
Daria A. Wasserbach, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary
Bobbie Felip, Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Elaine Studnicki, Director of Technology
Gerard Dalton, Principal, Clinton Township Middle School

ALSO PRESENT:

Elaine Mayat, Former Clinton Township School Board Member and Facilitator

RETREAT

The meeting opened with introductions and a brief teamwork exercise. The morning session began with focusing discussions on the present image and public and staff perceptions of the BOE and LT, both positive and negative. Ideal perceptions and principles were identified as:

- Be pro-active and innovative
- Strive for a clear and pure vision of our roles and responsibility
- Show high integrity and trustworthiness
- Work collaboratively
- Provide the best education and serve as a model for children
- Understand the pulse of the community, be receptive to feedback and responsive to the public
- Be reflective and fair in decisions
- Demonstrate fiscal responsibility

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS:

Each committee identified specific behaviors and actions recommended in order to demonstrate these values and principles

FACILITIES/FINANCE:

Chuck Many – Facilities Chair, Daria Wasserbach

- Increase the community's and staff's understanding of actual budget constraints. Present monthly budget updates at board meetings. Discuss significant changes (positive and negative) to the board and public.
- Request committees to report openly at board meetings on issues they are currently working on and encourage questions from the board to increase information and input.
- Develop a list of potential "*cut versus add*" items for the budget with priorities to facilitate changes when needed.
- Increase discretionary monies through new revenue generating ideas and actions.
- Continue generating new shared services in district.

PERSONNEL/NEGOTIATIONS:

Janette LaVigne, Roger Straight, Elizabeth Nastus

- The board needs to demonstrate their commitment to the teachers in our schools, and express their value to their commitment to children as displayed through all student performance.
- Contract settlement as soon as possible.
- Be more visible at school functions and publicly supportive of teachers work, creative ideas, and accomplishments whenever possible.
- Show appreciation to teachers in ways that do not cost money. For example, emails on accomplishments from board, pictures in news and bulletin boards in board office, inviting teachers to make presentations at board meetings with ideas, suggestions,

concerns, requests, and a suggestion box and Awards for Excellence for teacher performance.

POLICY/CURRICULUM:

Jim Dincuff – Chair, Mark Kaplan, Bobbie Felip

- Encourage more open discussions between board members on issues at public board meetings.
- Hold two public board meetings per month.
- Have an established liaison committee with mayor and town council to open lines of communication and develop more trustworthy relationship.
- All Board members should have enough lead time, knowledge and information on important board issues before public meeting.
- Committees should summarize their analyses before the vote on issues.
- Present committee findings as options at public meetings, with pros and cons for each option to the board at meetings.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Donna Gregory – Chair, Elaine Studnicki, Gerard Dalton

- Build board's reputation before a crisis: Be present at meetings, involved, and reflective before action is taken.
- Demonstrate ability to identify and balance the needs of all constituents: children, parents, community, retired residents, etc.
- Foster honest working relationship between the board and leadership team. Appreciate different backgrounds (Education versus Business). Put personal agendas aside to be most effective.
- Common Vision: Demonstrate a synergy of business, education, and best for children mentality when making all decisions for this township. This requires input from BOE, LT, Teachers, and public.
- Help in reaching a consensus: Honor the wishes of the whole BOE, not individual interests. This is where personal agendas negatively impact the effectiveness of the team. Vote your conscience, but if the majority wins, become a supporter of the issue and the team vote.
- Collaborative decision making and common vision: BOE and LT should talk, listen and define/clarify issues before responding or coming to a decision, and most certainly communicating our response. All need to remember to listen to the majority, not just the vocal minority on issues.

EVALUATION OF 2006/2007 DISTRICT GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The 2006-07 District Goals were sent out to all Board of Education and Leadership Team members as pre-work. Members were asked to evaluate, on a scale of 1-5, the degree to which the goal was accomplished during the year. The feedback was sent back to the facilitator before the retreat and then compiled anonymously for the team to review during the session. Actual results and comments from raters are on a separate attachment named: District Goals 06-07

Evaluation by BOE & LT Summary: Group discussion during the workshop identified the following recommendations:

1. District Goals need to have greater publication to more constituents: New board members, the leadership team, teachers, parents, community.
2. They need to be discussed more frequently at board meetings, status, and responsibilities and assignments. Accomplishments need to be documented and communicated.
3. The board and leadership team should plan their annual retreat earlier in the year, possibly in January or April so it works better with the timing for:
 - Developing the next year's budget in February – March.
 - Developing teachers PIP's in April – May.
 - Developing the Superintendents' Goals and Objectives in May – June.
 - Time for the CSA to disseminate, delegate, and appoint responsibility for certain aspects of the goals to the LT before the new school year.
4. Everyone agreed that including all the Leadership Team at the annual retreat with the Board was critical. Working together on goal setting fosters teamwork, and allows everyone to have input on the most important issues. The LT has first hand knowledge of the many issues, and we as a team could develop the goals for the next year with much more confidence if they were part of the process.

CURRENT DISTRICT ISSUES, PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Each committee identified items that exist in Clinton Township that need attention, and proactive opportunities that could add value to our district.

FACILITIES/FINANCE:

Chuck Many – Facilities Chair, Tom Roskoski – Finance Chair, Daria Wasserbach

- Operations and Maintenance equipment replacement schedule
- Summer facility use schedule
- Shared services agreement with Clinton Township
- Shared services agreements with other districts that generate revenue
- Grayrock Road property- Dispose? Fields? Other uses?
- Field development for CTMS
- Merit pay for all employees
- Grayrock Road improvements
- Parking lot pavement CTMS
- RVS playground
- In-house transportation/Courtesy busing
- Annual School Budget—What we need to do to ensure budget passing
- Does budget drive programs or do programs drive the budget?
- Assessment of programs for purpose of budget priorities
- Availability of all resources (identification)
- Establish revenue generating programs, i.e. after –school programs

PERSONNEL/NEGOTIATIONS:

Michelle Cresti – Chair, Janette LaVigne, Roger Straight, Elizabeth Nastus

- Increase morale and loyalty amongst teachers
- Settle contract with teachers.
- Maximize staff.
- Create reward system for teachers to foster excellence.
- Increase Staff Development

POLICY/CURRICULUM:

Jim Dincuff – Chair, Mark Kaplan, Bobbie Felip

- Improve image so that public feels board is responsive, open, trustworthy, and effective.
- Improve communications at board meetings to create open discussion and understanding of issues by the board, committees, leadership team, teachers, public.
- Create a new policy that clarifies usage for auditorium, including cost, and who is responsible to schedule.
- Increase NJASK test scores (3 – 8th grades).

COMMUNICATIONS:

Donna Gregory – Chair, Elaine Studnicki, Gerard Dalton

- Increase communication between board and leadership team to develop shared vision.
- Monitor progress toward reaching goals.
- Continue to communicate with public and seek new ways to reach them.
- Develop feedback mechanisms for public opinions, i.e. vote through website, CAC, phone (alert system)
- Create a community leadership committee vehicle to deliver information.
- Develop new methods to communicate with BOE members, staff, public, opinion leaders, parents, etc.
- Continue technology services and creative solutions to communications.

VOTING ON HIGH PRIORITY GOALS

Each individual voted on the list of issues based on criteria of *Urgency* (demanding, pressing) and *Importance* (potential value to district). Those receiving the highest number of votes were identified as the District Goals for 2007-08.

LINKING GOALS TO COMMITTEES

Committees then worked on the highest priority goals to ensure they were written SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely).

2007/2008 DISTRICT GOALS:

Communication

1. Goal: Improve the public image of the Board by starting in September 2007 to continuously demonstrate that we are striving to be more responsive, open, trustworthy and effective in our service to the district not only at Board meetings but in all aspects of operations and communications. Develop a feedback mechanism such as a survey by Sept-Oct 07 that will allow us to administer and measure our progress at the beginning and end of the school year. Complete by June 08.
2. Goal: Improve communication among all interest groups that result in increased positive feedback, voter turnout, and increased involvement by Teachers and community. Develop new methods to communicate with BOE members, staff, public, opinion leaders, and parents. Examples: Create brief email summary after BOE Meetings; Identify opinion leaders in district and create a method to continuously inform and involve them on issues, i.e. Advisory Committee; Work with PTA to develop a way to keep them better informed and involved with district and BOE issues; create better information flow mechanism for BOE members on issues so they can become more knowledgeable on issues and able to respond to questions. Complete by January 08.
3. Goal: Continue to maximize our current communications vehicles: CT Newsletter; Alerts (phone & email); Backpack Flyers; Principal Newsletters; Website; BCAC & CAC Meetings; Site Based "DCC" (District Communication Committee); BOE speaking at student events; BOE Meetings; BOE presence in the schools. Additionally, continue to seek new technology services and solutions for communications. Ongoing.
4. Goal: Increase communication and teamwork between BOE and Leadership Team that results in one shared vision. Ongoing.

Personnel/Negotiations

5. Goal: Staff Development: Increase teacher/staff participation and/or number of training programs offered over 2006-07 levels, focusing on cutting edge technology and teaching methods by June 2008. Leadership Team will assess staff and program needs and required funding, and make recommendation to Superintendent and BOE by October 07; Finance Committee to determine appropriate funding.
6. Goal: Settle Teacher's Contract by October 07 within budget parameters.

Facilities/Finance Committee

7. Goal: Develop and implement new and creative methods that will increase the public's involvement and knowledge of the budget process and specifics, increase voter turnout, and thereby increasing the chances of the budget passing in April 08. For example: Hold a Town Meeting, or an Open Finance Meeting in February; Develop a liaison committee between BOE and community; Prepare and distribute budget summary pamphlet. These specific tasks will be

shared by the Finance Committee, Communication Committee, Leadership Team, Business Administrator, and Superintendent. Present recommendations to the BOE by January 08.

8. Goal: Analyze the philosophical issue of “Does budget drive program, or does program drive budget” for our district. Present options for discussion to BOE before budget preparation time, January 08.

9. Goal: Develop an annual “wish list” of potential items and programs that have been requested but put on hold due to budget constraints. Items should be prioritized based on urgency and importance to the district. Facilities Committee will be responsible for the continual updating of the list and appropriate communication. Ongoing.

10. Goal: Identify various revenue generating programs for the district, i.e. After-School Program. Investigate feasibility and present to the Board for discussion. Ongoing.

Policy/Curriculum Committee

11. Goal: Increase 2008 NJASK test scores (3rd to 8th grades) as measured by an increased number of students over 2006-07 that moved from *Partially Proficient* ----to ----*Proficient*, and from *Proficient* ----to----*Advanced*. Results presented to BOE by June 2008

ADJOURNMENT

Action 08-042:

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education adjourns the meeting at 5:45 p.m. Motion by R. Straight, seconded by D. Gregory. On a roll call vote resolution was ADOPTED as follows: ayes, 8; nays, 0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Daria A. Wasserbach
School Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Minutes Prepared: 9/6/07
Minutes remain unofficial until Board of Education approval.

Board of Education Approved:

Roger Straight
Board President

9/24/07
Date