

Residency Task Force Meeting Minutes: August 22, 2018

Members Present:

Barbara Augugliaro	Karen Dovi	Connie Hussey
Tina Aulabaugh	Marissa Gargano	Eric Larca
Mary DeBellis	Rebecca Hegenauer	Gina Martin
		Joe Russo

Also in attendance were Dr. Valerie Henning-Piedmonte, Superintendent
Ms. Michelle Gosh, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
Mr. Victor Karlsson, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations
Mr. Joshua Loeffel, Assistant Director Pupil Personnel Svcs and McKinney-Vento Liaison
Dr. Robin Young, Co-Principal, Brewster High School
Ms. Leonor Volpe, Interim Assistant Supervisor of Transportation
Ms. Kathy Keane, Secretary to Mr. Karlsson
Ms. Donna Tarallo, Senior Clerk, Residency
Ms. Sonia Mesika, President, Board of Education
Ms. Kerry Cunningham, Trustee, Board of Education
Ms. Diane O'Brien, Trustee, Board of Education
Mr. Jim Drohan, Attorney for BCSD

Members Absent:

Lisa Alfonzetti	Melissa Frates	Debbie Mulvihill
Richard Anderson	Kelly Gronert	Ed Mulvihill
Joe Buonadonna	Lisa Hofle	Tim Murphy
Jamie Callanan	Jay Hogan	Mary Cay Nilsen
Peter Carey	Bryan Horn	Heather Ostman
Samantha DeBellis	Lila Horn	Melissa Paddock
Francine Del Bono	Allison Isola	Kirsten Rusinko
Joelle DePaola	Gina Kelly	Sharon Stephens
Karen DiTaranto	Wendy Lewis	Lara Sullivan
Alisa Ferrara	Clay Livingston	Carmela Surace
Ellen Finn	Chris Lyons	Tino Surace
William Finn	Curtis Maenza	Myra Vario
John Frates	Ann Marie McCarthy	Alfred Wagner
		Lori Wiltse

Also absent were Ms. Denise Harrington-Cohen, Assistant Director of Business
Ms. Elizabeth Kennedy, Director of Pupil Personnel Services
Ms. Nichole Horler, Principal, Brewster High School
Mr. John Clark, Principal, H.H. Wells Middle School
Ms. Theresa Cherry, Interim Principal, C.V. Starr Intermediate School
Dr. Frank Zamperlin, Principal, J.F.K. Elementary School
Ms. Mary E. Smith, Interim Supervisor of Transportation
Ms. Donna-Marie Morey, District Registrar
Ms. Allison Smith, Attorney for BCSD
Mr. Tony Olivo, Corporate Screening & Group, LLC

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- Mr. Karlsson began the meeting at 6:32 pm.
- The State Education Department (SED) sent out a residency guidance memo to all 700 school districts across the state, including an additional, more specific letter to Brewster. The Board of Education, school attorneys, and administrators held conference calls with SED on 7/26, 7/27, 8/7 and 8/14. The result of SED's input were revisions to the forms and procedures of Brewster's residency verification program, which were captured in the Board's clarification letter to the community on July 27th.
- Mr. Drohan noted that everyone needed to prove residency, however, no one would be excluded due to failure to produce documents. He also advised that the State prohibits the District from asking about the immigration status of students.
- A letter was sent out to the community on July 27th clarifying that this process was to verify and update residency information, and that this was not a re-registration as initially described. Documents internally are consistent with the FAQs (frequently asked questions) and hyperlinks have been created.
- Mr. Drohan reiterated that the District was never advised by SED that this process was illegal. The only issues appeared to be with language and consistency of the documents. SED will periodically check our website for consistency.
- Ms. Mesika inquired about the community's options for complying with the document request. Mr. Drohan advised that, in addition to scheduling an appointment, residents could drop off their documents at the district office or other drop-box locations. The State appears to be satisfied with these options.
- Another member inquired as to how the district was tracking the receipt of documents. Mr. Karlsson advised that an additional field was created in the student database if the family had provided residency documents. He then provided the following:
 - As of 8/17/18, approximately 70% of the District's students had provided documentation (2,268 students)
 - In the first few weeks of the process, residency verification documents were received for 109 students on average per day; but just 42 per day from 7/23 through 8/17
 - Appointments will continue through 9/28/18
 - After 9/28, the district will reach out individually to families who have not responded
 - Drop boxes will be distributed to designated locations throughout the District
 - In addition to the district office, parents can drop off their documents at one of the school buildings
- The burden of proof is on the District, not on the resident. If a family does not submit documents to verify residency, the District will proceed with other measures of

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determining the residency status of the family, which may include surveillance. Throughout the process, the student(s) would still remain enrolled.

- Mr. Karlsson acknowledged the incredible job being done by the registrars and how confidential and courteous they have been throughout the process.
- Additional questions and answers regarding the drop off of documents:
 - Q - How will the district verify that the person placing documents into the dropbox are who they say they are?
A - District Registrar will contact the family to acknowledge receipt.
 - Q - How safe are the locations of the drop boxes?
A - They will be located inside offices and are accessible only during business hours.
 - Q - When parents bring their documents to the school buildings, will they be reviewed then and there?
A - No. The documents will be sent to the district office for review by the District Registrar.
- NY/CT Borderline properties:
 - In some cases, property in the Brewster Central School District is classified as residential vacant land, meaning that there is no dwelling located on the parcel.
 - One Task Force member asked the Board to consider the educational continuity of children affected, many of whom have attended Brewster schools for several years. Mr. Drohan advised that current policy allows seniors to complete their final year, but makes no such provision for other students.
 - Another Task Force member asked if an arrangement could not be made to split taxes more evenly between Brewster/CT for these properties. He stated that the District had no leverage, and there is no incentive for CT to comply. Without a legal requirement, it would be difficult to ask them to agree to such a change.
 - Mr. Karlsson confirmed that this circumstance applies to one family to-date, but others may be identified through the completion of the residency verification program.
 - Ms. Mesika questioned whether or not the District could allow non-resident students to attend by paying tuition. Mr. Drohan pointed out that special needs students would require more assistance/services and students with disciplinary issues would need to be accepted as well.
 - He further mentioned that tuition rates are set by New York State, so the District could not charge higher rates for students with special needs to accommodate the additional services they require.
 - Another question was raised with regard to purchasing a home which has been marketed in either district (Brewster and CT) to which Mr. Drohan responded that the District cannot be held responsible if a realtor misrepresents a home/property.
 - This subject will be further discussed at the 8/21 Board of Education meeting.

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- Brewster/North Salem:
 - The handling of these borderline properties is different than those involving CT because both school districts are within New York and are both governed by SED regulations.
 - Some homes are on the border of both school districts and may have the option of attending either, while being assessed by one. For example, Brewster CSD may be collecting taxes, but the children are permitted to attend North Salem CSD. In this example, Brewster CSD would be required to remit taxes collected on this property to North Salem CSD. The reverse situation applies equally, whereas if North Salem CSD collects taxes, but the children attend Brewster CSD, North Salem CSD would remit taxes to Brewster CSD.
 - These conditions would only exist if the school boundary line intersects the dwelling located on the property.
- Mr. Karlsson reiterated that no student will be turned away during the residency verification program without a formal residency determination process, as required by SED. He reminded the task force that residency investigations may take several weeks to complete, and especially those that involve surveillance.
- The District is currently following-up on certain families who have presented insufficient residency verification documents. Mr. Karlsson stressed that this does not necessarily imply that they are not residents, but instead that more information may be needed to confirm their residency status. In these instances, the District will utilize Corporate Screening & Investigative Group to research/investigate.
- The District has not tracked changes of address in the past, but has begun to do so as of July 1st. If staffing resources are available, the District can follow up with families in temporary living arrangements to request updated residency documents in the future.
- A task force member asked if the District looks for students who do not return and do not disenroll, and whether or not Child Protective Services (CPS) is contacted. Ms. Gosh advised that the District does take steps which may eventually lead to the involvement of CPS.
- Mr. Karlsson reminded the task force that the verification process would go through the end of the 2018-2019 school year. He also announced that additional meetings would be held:
 - Tuesday, October 16, 2018 at 6:30pm (BHS ILC)
 - Thursday, February 7, 2019 at 6:30pm (BHS ILC)
 - Thursday, June 27, 2019 at 6:30pm (BHS ILC)
- The meeting adjourned at 7:12 pm.