

Residency Task Force Meeting Minutes: June 20, 2019

Members Present:

Edwin Alvarez	Kelly Gronert	Joe Russo
Barbara Augugliaro	Rebecca Hegenauer	Sarah Russo
Jamie Callanan	Connie Hussey	Chris Sherman
Mary DeBellis	Eric Larca	Sharon Stephens
Chris DeBellis	Wendy Lewis	Carmela Surace
Francine Del Bono	Jennifer Mulvihill	Tino Surace

Also in attendance were Dr. Michelle Gosh, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

Mr. Victor Karlsson, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations

Mr. Art Holzmann, Residency Officer

Dr. Frank Zamperlin, Principal, J.F.K. Elementary School

Ms. Kathy Keane, Secretary to the Assistant Superintendent

Ms. Sonia Mesika, President, Board of Education

Ms. Diane O'Brien, Trustee, Board of Education

Ms. Allison Smith, Attorney for BCSD

Mr. Tony Olivo, Corporate Screening & Investigative Group, LLC

Members Absent:

Lisa Alfonzetti	Ellen Finn	Curtis Maenza
Richard Anderson	William Finn	Gina Martin
Tina Aulabaugh	John Frates	Debbie Mulvihill
Joe Buonadonna	Melissa Frates	Ed Mulvihill
Peter Carey	Marisa Gargano	Tim Murphy
Jennifer Cormier	Lisa Hofle	Heather Ostman
Samantha DeBellis	Jay Hogan	Kirsten Rusinko
Lorraine DeNichilo	Lila Horn	Mary E. Smith
Joelle DePaola	Bryan Horn	Myra Vario
Karen DiTaranto	Gina Kelly	Leonor Volpe
Karen Dovi	Clay Livingston	Alfred Wahner
Alissa Ferrara	Chris Lyons	

Also absent were Dr. Valerie Henning-Piedmonte, Superintendent

Ms. Kerry Cunningham, Trustee, Board of Education

Ms. Elizabeth Kennedy, Director of Pupil Personnel Services

Ms. Nichole Horler, Principal, Brewster High School

Dr. Robin Young, Co-Principal, Brewster High School

Ms. Theresa Cherry, Interim Principal, C.V. Starr Intermediate School

Ms. Donna-Marie Morey, District Registrar

Mr. Jim Drohan, Attorney for BCSD

- The meeting began at 6:32 pm. All committee members were given an agenda and copies of all documents to be discussed.

- Mr. Holzmann referenced the prior meeting's minutes, briefly reviewing some of the items discussed.
- Next, he reviewed the most updated figures from the Residency Verification Program through June 12th. He noted that 98% of students have been verified, but there are still 87 students remaining to be verified. He also shared that five students have been excluded as non-residents to-date through the Residency Verification Program.
- Mr. Larca asked how many more students will likely be determined as non-residents of the 87 remaining to which Mr. Holzmann responded that he could not speculate until investigations are completed.
- Mr. Russo questioned how a situation would be handled if a public record search was not conclusive to prove residency, to which Mr. Karlsson responded that those cases would then be handed over to private investigation.
- Mrs. Lewis questioned whether or not tips are confidential, to which Allison Smith, attorney for BCSD, recommended the use of Anonymous Alerts as opposed to a direct email communication.
- Mr. Russo questioned whether or not NYS Regulations require court-ordered custody agreements, to which Ms. Smith described Commissioner's Regulation 100.2 which indicates that satisfactory proof that the children's parent(s) have transferred total care, custody and control of the children. Such proof may include custody orders, orders of guardianship, or a Parent and/or Custodial Affidavit.
- Ms. Callanan stressed the importance of continuing to strengthen the District's requirements to the maximum extent permissible by law. She expressed frustration in what appears to be the District taking a less restrictive approach than other school districts throughout the region.
- Ms. Callanan questioned whether or not expiring leases have been recorded in the student database system, to which Mr. Holzmann affirmed that lease data is now being collected and monitored. He provided a redacted screenshot a student profile in the student database system which included the lease expiration date field.
- Mrs. Russo questioned how a new student could be registered with an address which lists "1st Floor" or "Basement" and whether or not the child's safety is at risk by overcrowded living conditions.
 - Dr. Zamperlin described the reporting requirements for Child Protective Services (CPS), of which overcrowding is not considered.
 - Mr. Holzmann suggested that residents who have concerns about overcrowded homes should report them to the applicable Town or Village building department.
- Ms. Russo indicated that in her capacity in WMS, she sometimes receives identification at parent pickup that conflicts with the address listed in the student database system.
 - Mrs. Augugliaro reminded the group that the purpose of requiring identification is to prove the parent's identity and not the person's address. It is possible that the identification was issued several years ago under the address at which the individual was living in at the time of issuance.

- Dr. Gosh discussed Anonymous Alerts and affirmed the anonymity of community members providing tips through the system.
- Dr. Gosh then presented data on enrollment trends, reviewing activity from the past four years. The data indicated that while year-to-year enrollment is on the decline, it is typical for enrollment to actually increase from July 1st through June 30th during each school year.
- Ms. Callanan questioned whether or not any of the seniors who were “set-aside” due to BoE policy (based on past NYS Commissioner’s decisions), would be graduating from the district. Mr. Holzmann informed the committee that he inquired about their graduation status back in February and that all unverified seniors were graduating. Dr. Gosh informed the committee that she would follow-up to ensure they would graduate.
- Mr. Larca and Ms. Callanan suggested that there should be a plan moving forward to continue re-verification at certain intervals, such as when students transfer from one building to the next.
- Ms. Hegenauer remarked about the excessive cost of the Residency Verification Program. Mr. Karlsson informed the committee that approximately \$160K had been spent to-date, and he estimates that another \$50-\$75K would be necessary in order to complete the program.
- Dr. Zamperlin reviewed the latest Kindergarten enrollment figures for 2019-20 and acknowledged the diligence of Ms. Augugliaro and Ms. Morey in ensuring that all new Kindergarten registrants provided sufficient residency documents.
 - Ms. Augugliaro compared the process to past years and noted the improvement in the efficiency of the process and improved follow-up. She further acknowledged the hard work and dedication of Ms. Morey and stressed her appreciation not only as an employee but also as a resident.
 - Ms. Augugliaro also noted that because Kindergarten registration is so voluminous, it is somewhat decentralized, but assured that all residency documents are verified by Ms. Morey. Ms. Russo, through her work in WMS, also acknowledged how diligent Ms. Morey is in performing her duties.
- Mr. Olivo described the residency investigation process and certain techniques, acknowledging the work of Mr. Holzmann and Ms. Morey. He indicated that the District’s procedures will begin to deter families from attempting to register fraudulently in the future.
- Mr. Holzmann informed the group that a final report would be presented to the Board of Education in the Fall at the conclusion of the Residency Verification Program. He thanked the Task Force members for their time and contributions to the District.
- The meeting concluded at 8:05 pm.