

Approved 4/21/09

**SPECIAL MEETING**  
**“HOLIDAY TRADITIONS & CULTURAL DIVERSITY”**  
**Litchfield Board of Education Advisory Committee**  
**Monday, April 6, 2009, Litchfield Community Center, 3 to 5 PM**

Meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m.

Committee Members Present: Bill Burgess, Christopher Clark, Beth DeFiore, Kristen Della Volpe, Andeen Tarrant-Fischer, Andrienne Longobucco, Jennifer Marinelli, Mary McDevitt, Eileen McKenna, Alison O’Leary, Bob Petricone, Jeanne Sandrib, Frank Simone, Sue Smith, Nancy Yugelun, Berta Andrulis, Maggie Kresel and Gayle Carr (arrived late). Debra Brandt has stepped down from committee. Kay Jones, absent.

Approval of Minutes of March 31, 2009: Motion made by F. Simone and seconded by B. Petricone to accept the meeting minutes of March 31, 2009.

Motion carried. All votes were in the affirmative. There were no abstentions.

Public Comment:

B. Burgess read a letter that had been submitted by Patricia O’Neill Deering.

Kelly Garden (Parent of students at Center and LIS): applauds color and culture program; resents that it does not supplement traditions; upset that religious holidays are not being included. People in community are not aware of what committee is doing. Time slot of meetings is not convenient for parents of school children. Food issue should focus on obesity concerns not an occasional celebration at school. Need to be sensitive to this. Requested committee conclude its study by end of April rather than May. Teacher Appreciation Week permissible this year in light of what is going on?

Discuss and Approve Task Statement: The task statement was approved unanimously.  
Thoughts and feedback:

- Focus on “living outside Litchfield as adult.”
- Emphasis on benchmark i.e., New Hartford schools’ policies.
- Governance, boundaries, accountability, flexibility.
- Consider demographic group; hear the voice of under-represented.

Review Current Litchfield Public Schools (LPS) Curriculum Practice:

- Beth DeFiore (Center School nurse) referred to progressive and inevitable change versus a sudden change.
- Instruction Policy #6112.1 from 1996 and Student Wellness Nutrition policy of 2006 – faculty developed alternative rewards to food; creative options.
- Issue of student confidentiality a matter of concern.
- Planning process an important element.
- CAFE policies need to be considered.

- Center School changes are more noticeable (NEASC); accreditation process is every 10 years; students need to engage in more multi-cultural programs and expand on cultural diversity. Recommendations versus mandates for Center School.
- Center School response to recommendations: Committee of staff and students, “The World is a Rainbow”, Colors, Countries and Cultures Program. Work in progress.
- Social Studies curriculum relative to holidays specific to culture and history of USA.
- Every month a letter goes home with the students at Center School to parents, concerning color of month, theme of month, and what is planned.
- Eileen McKenna commented that there are LPS policies but no regulations; focus of policies “gray” area.

Review and Discuss LPS *Controversial Issues Policy and Regulations*:

- Reviewed (#6144 and #6144AR) by Kristen Della Volpe with discussion with other committee members a template to be used.

B. Burgess distributed publications, “The Santa Dilemma”, “Help for the Holidays”, Public Education, Private Faith”, and “Teaching About Religion” (all reprinted with permission from the American School Board Journal publications).

Meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted  
Berta Andrulis  
Secretary Pro-Temp