

**Please note: These minutes are pending BOE approval.
Board of Education
Newtown, Connecticut**

Minutes of the Board of Education meeting on Friday, January 17, 2014 at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers at 3 Primrose Street.

D. Leidlein, Chair	J. Reed
L. Roche, Vice Chair	L. Gejda
K. Hamilton, Secretary	R. Bienkowski
K. Alexander	10 Staff
J. Vouros	40 Public
D. Freedman	5 Press
M. Ku	

Item 1 – Call to Order

Mrs. Leidlein called the meeting to order at 7:36 p.m.

Item 2 – Discussion and Appointment of Superintendent of Schools

MOTION: Mrs. Roche moved that Joseph V. Erardi, Jr. be, and is hereby elected Superintendent for Schools for the Town of Newtown, and that the Board Chair is authorized to enter into an employment agreement with said Joseph V. Erardi, Jr. in the form provided to Board members prior to this meeting. Mr. Alexander seconded.

Ms. Hamilton said she was excited to have Dr. Erardi in the position of wanting to be our Superintendent. She requested an amendment to the motion.

MOTION: Ms. Hamilton moved to amend the motion to state that if there are any changes to the agreement, with the exception of a start date, that the changes are brought to the Board prior to the finalization. Mr. Vouros seconded.

Ms. Hamilton said the Board worked as a committee of the whole and should receive any changes.

Vote on the amendment: Motion passes unanimously.

Mr. Alexander said it would be easy to spend a number of hours stating why we chose Dr. Erardi. He appreciated all of the positive communication supporting their decision.

Mr. Vouros was thrilled that Dr. Erardi has become the eighth member of this team.

Motion passes unanimously.

Mrs. Roche read the attached press release.

Mrs. Leidlein thanked Mrs. Roche for the wonderful job she did leading the Board through this process.

Mrs. Roche thanked Mrs. Jackie Jacoby, the CABA search consultant, and appreciated what she and her team did for our district.

Mr. Freedman found that Dr. Erardi has been an incredible asset to Southington. People commented that this was Southington's gift to Newtown. Relationships he built there are extraordinary. He is very grateful that he is coming to us.

Mrs. Leidlein stated that our Board has gone through emotional decisions in the past. When Dr. Reed came on we knew we had a strong leader to guide us through a difficult time. She has the same feeling of confidence that this is the right decision for Newtown and welcomed Dr. Erardi.

Dr. Erardi thanked the Board, Dr. Reed and Mrs. Jacoby. He is humbled to be the next Superintendent for Newtown. Newtown is the only other district in the country that he would have been interested in. He will be respectful of the past, will work hard in the present, and is excited about the future of the Newtown schools.

MOTION: Mr. Alexander moved to adjourn. Mrs. Roche seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 3 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

A reception followed.

Respectfully submitted:

Kathy Hamilton
Secretary

January 17, 2014

The Newtown Board of Education Selects Dr. Joseph Erardi as Superintendent of Schools

We are very pleased to announce the selection of Dr. Joseph Erardi as the new Superintendent of the Newtown Public Schools. Dr. Erardi comes to us with an impressive career as a teacher, where he was recognized as an Honoree for an American Teacher Award, assistant principal, high school principal and civic leader, having received "Chamber of Commerce Businessman of the Year". Dr. Erardi has served successfully as Superintendent of Schools for the last 14 years, in three distinctly different CT communities, the last eight years of which were in Southington, CT. In each of these communities he achieved evaluations of distinction from the Boards of Education and has been highly regarded by staff and parents for the masterful way he engaged, collaborated and partnered with all stakeholders while raising academic expectations and student achievement.

The selection of the Superintendent is one of the most important decisions that the Newtown Board of Education will make for our schools and our community. We are extremely appreciative of the over 575 individuals who participated in the superintendent search through surveys and focus groups, providing their perspectives in helping define the qualities of an ideal Superintendent for Newtown. Focus groups were held in September, October and November of 2013 with the Board of Education, faculty, students, administrators, school support staff, parents, PTA leadership, clergy, community members including senior citizens, Board of Education support staff, town staff and town officials including the Legislative Council, Board of Finance and Board of Selectman. The Newtown Superintendent Search Survey was available on-line from September 10, 2013 through October 25, 2013. The majority (69%) of the over 400 surveys were completed by parents and community members and (31%) completed by school staff, town officials, town staff and students. The Newtown Board of Education members have given their commitment of time and talent throughout this comprehensive process and chose Dr. Erardi unanimously for this leadership position. The unity of thinking represented in this decision speaks well for the future of the Newtown Public Schools and Community.

Over 30 candidates submitted complete applications and these were carefully reviewed for fit with the profile of qualities desired by the many constituents who gave us input. The Newtown Board of Education conducted several rounds of interviews and extensive reference checks. Through this process, Joe rose to the top of a very competitive group. Several of the candidates the Board interviewed were well qualified and would have provided strong leadership for the District; but Dr. Erardi was exceptional for his depth and breadth of understanding not only of the academic side of the equation but the human side as well.

Throughout the interview process Joe exhibited deep knowledge about instruction, particularly with the recent initiative to restructure K-8 literacy with Reader's/Writer's Workshop, and also improving student achievement evidenced by Southington's

recognition for National distinction by the College Boards for performance in Advanced Placement courses.

Skills and attributes which aligned particularly well with those identified in the Newtown Leadership profile include Joe's commitment to parent and community involvement in the schools (including daily community hours from 6:30 to 7:30 am) and his knowledge of budget and finance, including garnering resources as founder of the Southington Education Foundation

As the final step in our selection process, four Board of Education members conducted a site visit on January 10th to Southington. They met with Southington Board of Education members, elected officials, community leaders, parents, teachers, principals and Central Office staff. All 38 know Dr. Erardi well and provided universally glowing testimonials of his skills, knowledge, and character and they voiced their disappointment in his leaving. However, they also stated that if he must go, they understood why he would be leaving to go to Newtown. They described him as caring, collaborative, intelligent, committed, compassionate and energetic. He is an educational leader who knows when to compromise and when to hold the line. He is a strategic problem solver and his actions match his words. His leadership was described as practical yet visionary and he has a strong work ethic.

A former Bolton Board of Education Chairperson spoke about Joe's beliefs about public education and student centered learning and his unwavering guidance leading the district to new levels of excellence. She said, "Where there was ambiguity, he provided focus, where there was obscurity, he brought light. In disappointment he fostered inspiration and finally wherever Joe Erardi was, there was respect, dedication, passion for education, all delivered with goodwill and good humor".

Please join us in welcoming Dr. Joseph Erardi as the new Superintendent for Newtown Public Schools. The final details of his transition are being worked out; we anticipate that he will join us officially in the spring. The Newtown Board of Education will hold a reception in the near future, so that staff, parents and the community can meet and welcome him.

Debbie Leidlein, NBOE Chairperson, Laura Roche, NBOE Vice Chairperson and Chairperson of the Superintendent Search Committee, Kathy Hamilton NBOE Secretary, Keith Alexander, John Vouros, David Freedman and Michelle Embree Ku