Highland Central School District AGENDA

Board of Education Meeting

Tuesday, December 17, 2013

7:00 pm Open Meeting To be held in the High School Cafeteria



CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Any topic related to the agenda may be addressed except for personnel or specific student issues.

Protocol for Public Comment:

The school board encourages public participation at its meetings. To allow for efficiency in conducting meetings and to give each speaker a fair opportunity to present his/her views the following shall apply to the public speaking portion of the agenda.

- Each speaker shall state their name:
- Any questions/concerns be submitted in writing with speaker's contact information (name/address/phone number);
- Each speaker shall be limited to a time agreed upon by the Board;
- The Board will not permit discussion involving individual personnel or students;
- Direct all remarks to chair. Community members may not poll individual Board members nor debate other community members in attendance.

Members of the community are encouraged to also present their comments in writing. Undue interruption or other interference with the orderly conduct of the Board of Education business will not be allowed. Defamatory or abusive remarks are always out of order.

ACCEPTANCE OF REPORTS:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education acknowledges reviewing the following reports:

- a) Board of Education Meeting Minutes November 13, 2013 & November 19, 2013
- b) Claims Auditor Report October 2013 & November 2013
- c) Attendance & Enrollment Report Dates: Period 3 11/01/2013-11/30/2013

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION:

a) Principal's Report:

Each month the Principals will report on updates in their respective building.

b) Director of Student Services Report:

Director of Student Services, Barbara E. Chapman, will report on operations of the Student Services Department.

c) Approval of Committee on Special Education Minutes

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education hereby accepts the recommendations of the Committee on Special Education according to the minutes of the CSE meetings of November 25th, 2013, and the transfer in meeting – no meetings of November 20th, 2013, and authorizes the arrangements for such students' special education programs and services.

d) Approval of Committee on Preschool Special Education

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education hereby accepts the recommendations of the Committee on Preschool Special Education according to the minutes of the CPSE meetings of December 5th, 2013, and authorizes the arrangements for such students' special education programs and services.

PERSONNEL:

a) Medical Leave

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the request for medical leave for the following employee:

Employee:

Megan Erichsen

Effective Date:

On or about February 10th, 2014 – Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Position:

AIS Math Teacher / Elementary School

b) Extra-Curricular Appointment

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the extra-curricular appointment for the following employee for the school year 2013-2014:

• Terri Cilento / Peer Leadership Assistant - Middle School / \$609.00

c) Stipend Salary

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the following stipend salary for the 2013-2014 winter season:

• Modified Wrestling / \$1,688.00

d) Performance Payment – Superintendent Secretary

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the following:

• Carly Jacobsen / Performance Payment – Superintendent Secretary

e) Substitute Teaching Appointments

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the attached revised substitute teaching list with an Emergency Conditional Appointment consistent with SAVE legislation requirements.

f) Non-Teaching Substitute Appointments

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the attached revised Non-Teaching substitute list with an Emergency Conditional Appointment consistent with SAVE legislation requirements.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS - Priyanka Dongare

BUSINESS AND OPERATIONS:

SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

BOARD OF EDUCATION:

New Business:

- a) <u>Correspondence</u> Any correspondence received by the Board may be discussed.
- b) Future BOE Agenda Items

Old Business:

- a) Electronic Use Policy -2nd Reading
- b) <u>Capital Project</u> Discussion

would substantially affect the value thereof.

<u>PUBLIC COMMENTS:</u> Any topic related to the agenda may be addressed except for personnel or specific student issues.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Anticipated upon Board approval

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Highland Central School District conduct an Executive Session to discuss the following topics:

1. _____ Matters which will imperil the public safety if disclosed;

2. ____ Any matter which may disclose the identity of law enforcement agent or informer;

3. ____ Information relating to current or future investigations or prosecution of criminal offices, which would imperil effective law enforcement if disclosed;

4. ____ Discussions regarding proposed, pending, or current litigation;

5. _x__ Collective Negotiations pursuant to Article 14 (Taylor Law) of the Civil Service Law;

6. _x__ The Medical, financial or credit, employment history of a particular person or corporation, or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal or removal of a particular person or corporation;

7. ____ The preparation, grading or administration of examinations;

8. ____ A proposed acquisition, sale, or lease of real property or the proposed acquisition of securities, or sale or exchange or securities held by such public body, but only when publicity

ADJOURNMENT

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Highland High School Principal's Report December 3, 2013

Enrollment:	12/13/2013	Staffing:	Teachers	Support Sta	ıff
9 th grade: 10 th grade: 11 th grade: 12 th grade: Total	138 148 143 150 579	Full time HH Full time tra Part Time:		Teacher Assistants: Teacher Aides: Monitors:	3 0 1
Calendar: December 11 December 23 January 1 st : January 2 nd :		Winte Winte	Vinter Concer r Break r Break I reopens	t	

Distracted Driving Presentation — On December 5th, a whole school assembly was held with guest speaker Jacy Good delivering her message about the perils of distracted driving. Ms. Good shared why cell phone use while driving is a dangerous and deadly behavior. She has traveled the U.S. sharing her story and has appeared on Oprah, in *People* magazine and was a speaker at the 2010 Women's Conference hosted by Maria Shriver. She plays an active role seeking legislation that will ban cell phone use while driving, and she is a member of the board of directors at FocusDriven Advocates for Cell-Free Driving, a nonprofit organization for cell phone distracted driving victims and their families. The program was brought to HHS through the Greater New Paltz Community Partnership, the NYSP Law Enforcement Liaison Sgt. Engwer and the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee.

Gay- Straight Alliance and College Psychology Trip to Rockland Psychiatric Center – Twenty seven students travelled to the Rockland Psychiatric Center on December 13 to share gift bags, food and clothing donations to the patients at the center. Fundraising has been ongoing by the GSA to support the purchase of gifts and food for the patients. Much time was spent preparing our students to engage and interact with those they visited in order to make the day rewarding, successful and appreciated.

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Holiday Spirit Week -

Mon 12/16 PJ's Day!
Tue 12/17 Swinter Day!
Wed 12/18 Ugly Sweater Day!
Thurs 12/19 Snow-Out Day!
Fri 12/20 Holly Day! And a Holiday Concert during period 8

Regents Preparatory Tutoring – students who were unsuccessful in receiving credit on Regents/RCT exams in the past are now receiving tutoring aimed at helping them to succeed on the January exams. This program is intended to help students meet a formerly unfulfilled graduation requirement.

Student Council and Interact Food Drive - In support of the Koinonia Food Pantry located at the Methodist Church, the Student Council is sponsoring a holiday food drive. Students and teachers are being encouraged to bring in canned or other prepackaged non-perishable food items for donation. The top donating first period classes will be treated to breakfast courtesy of the Student Council.

Advanced Placement Testing Registration – Registration for Advanced Placement testing is now open on the school web page. Students wishing to sit for AP testing in May are expected to register using the web page by January 29. A payment of \$89 per test is also due at the time of registration.

HHS Winter Concert – a thank you to the nearly 100 student musicians for a spectacular winter concert. A full auditorium was treated to many festive songs. The chorus also welcomed two alumni participants for their finale presentation of "Hallelujah".

Tri M Music Honor Society - Tri M Music Honor Society is visiting the Valley Vista Senior Facility on Dec. 17th to perform holiday songs.

HHS Theatre – The theater class will be performing short scenes on Wednesday, Dec. 18th and Thursday, Dec. 19 period 4. All teachers have been invited to bring their classes to participate as the audience.

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HIGHLAND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL Principal's Report - December 12, 2013

Enrollment:

K: 136

1st: 152

2nd: 146

3rd: 115

4th: 134

5th: 128

Total:

811 (as of 12/12/2013)

PTA:

The December PTA meeting included a review of the proposed capital project including the display boards that were on display during Parent/Teacher Conferences.

PBIS:

Referral free classes were entering into a drawing for an incentive 'pinata' party this month. Two classes were chosen to receive the party – in K-2: Mrs. Milby's Kindergarten class and in 3-5: Mrs. McCracken's class. PBIS committee will be hosting School Spirit Days in the coming week.

12/18 - Highland Day - Wear Blue and Gold

12/19 - Polar Express Day - Wear Pajamas

12/20 - Holiday Day - Wear Holiday colors

Local Assistance Plan (LAP) - Quality Improvement Plan (QIP):

After BOE approval last month, our LAP has been posted to the web site. The next stage of this process is to enter into a QIP. Sarah Dudley-Lemek, Barbara Chapman and Joel Freer met with Barbara Tischler-Hastie (BOCES Liaison/SESIS) on December 5th to discuss the work to be done in the coming months – a rough outline follows:

12/13/2013: Barbara Tischler-Hastie will meet elementary special education staff to describe the walkthrough process 1/2-1/22/2014: SESIS walkthroughs of special education classrooms to obtain data about special education program 1/23/2014: QIP Team meeting to discuss data from SESIS walkthroughs

1/24-4/10/2014: Professional development series facilitated by SESIS

4/11/2014 : QIP Team meeting to discuss professional development series and planning for summer development work

Annual Professional Performance Reviews (APPRs):

Type of APPR	Completed	Still to do
Announced	45	31
Unannounced	2	74

Staffing:

Type of Staffing	FTE
General Education – Classroom Teachers	35.0
Special Education (Inclusion, 12:1, 8:1, Resource, ESL)	14.0
Special Area (Art, Music, Library, PE, AIS)	11.2
Special Supports (Psychologist, Social Worker, OT/PT, Speech, Nurse)	6.0
Teaching Assistants/Aides	21.0
Secretaries/Attendance Clerk	3.0
Monitor	1.0
Health Aide/LPN	2.0
Security	1.0
Café Monitors (2.5 hrs)	12

Upcoming Events:

Elementary Winter Concert: Monday, December 16th (6:30 pm – HHS Auditorium) – Snow Date 12/18/2013 Elementary PTA Meeting: Monday, January 6th (6:30 pm – 8:00 pm)

Highland Middle School Principal's Report December 12, 2013

Enrollment:	12/12/13	Staffing:	Teachers		Support Staff	
6 th grade: 7 th grade: 8 th grade:	137 143 161	Ful	l time HMS: l time travel: t Time:		Teacher Assistants: Teacher Aides: Monitors:	8 3 3
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MASTER SCHEDULING: I have the "mock" master schedule completed. As I mentioned in my last report, reverting to a 9 period schedule without increased staffing would result in over 350 study seats per day. Based on this "mock "schedule, with the addition of 2 staff members, this study hall number would be reduced to approximately 120 per day. I am now looking at how many additional staff members it would take to revert to the use of teaming.

CURRICULUM WRITING: I have begun to receive curriculum outlines from staff members. This is our first step in aligning curriculum across subject area and grade level. It is also the opportunity to begin the alignment of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) with subject material. The idea is to assure that each standard contained in the CCLS are addressed multiple times and fluidly throughout the school year. Interestingly, as hoped, this process has started discussion among teachers concerning content and skills being taught.

PBIS: Our first referral free recognition for PBIS occurred on 26th and was a success. Students participated in many different events and seemed to thoroughly enjoy themselves.

This year, we implemented a system to resolve what we believe to be an excessive level of tardiness to school. If students are tardy 3 times in a 5 week period, they receive a warning. If they are tardy again, they receive a behavior referral likely resulting in lunch detention. During the first 5 weeks of school, there were 33 students receiving a warning and/or referral. During the second 5 weeks, this number dropped to 27. With one week left of the 3rd 5 week period, this number stands at 8. We will be watching this data closely to determine if we are impacting overall tardiness. It seems that some students need a little extra incentive to see the importance of being on time for school.

PBIS is holding an ugly sweater contest on Friday the 20th. Put on your ugliest sweater and show it off at the middle school.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES (SLOs): After reviewing SLOs, and then meeting with many teachers, we have determined, in some cases, to modify the predictions teachers have submitted. In some cases, the predictions will be increased, and in some cases, decreased. It is very difficult to predict how well your students will do. Most teachers reviewed multiple data

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sources to make these predictions including, attendance data, ELA and Math scores, Reading CBM score and Moby math scores. There was also an agreement to closely review predictions from this year with actual results and then determine if next year's predictions need to be more rigorous.

CLUBS: I have been approached by several students that are interested in starting a math club. They are currently talking to teachers to see if anyone is interested in being an advisor. Also, our Student Council is now up and running. Ben Smith, a Highland graduate and assistant modified football coach is the advisor.

FOOD DRIVE: We have significantly exceeded last year's number of food items collected. Last year we collected over 700. This year the number is 1611 items. I think this is significant for many reasons, but most importantly, it demonstrates that we have a school community that cares.

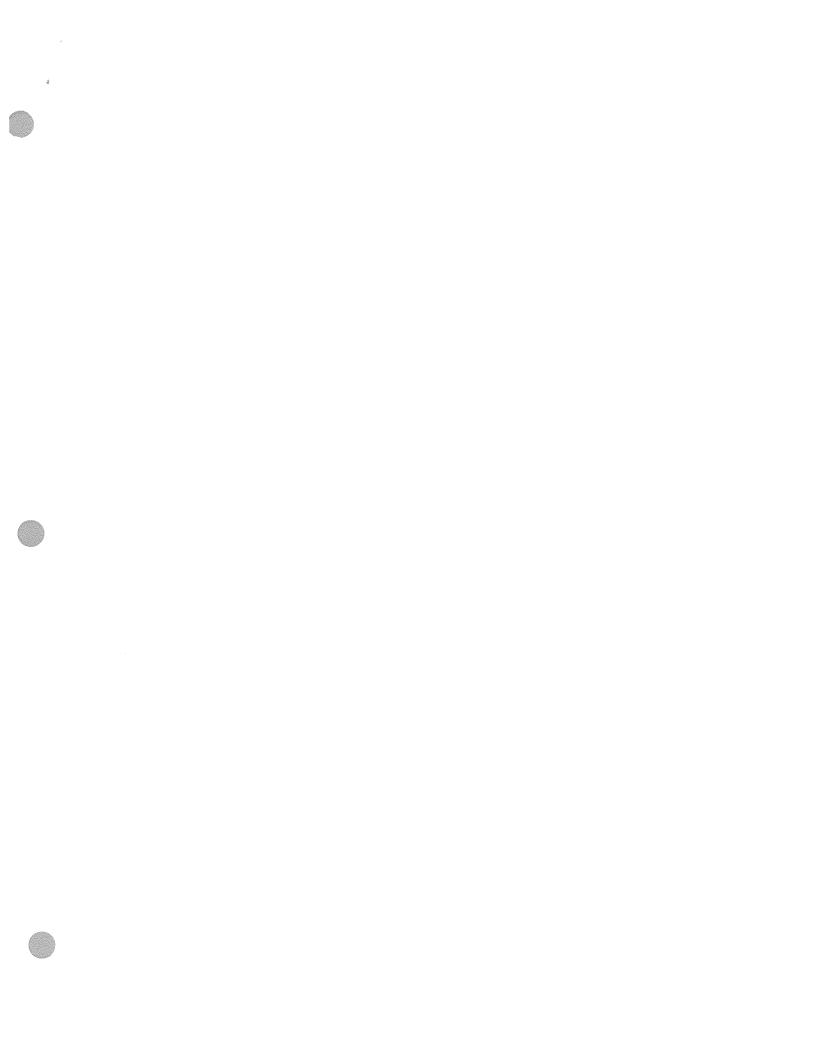
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Highland Central School District Student Services

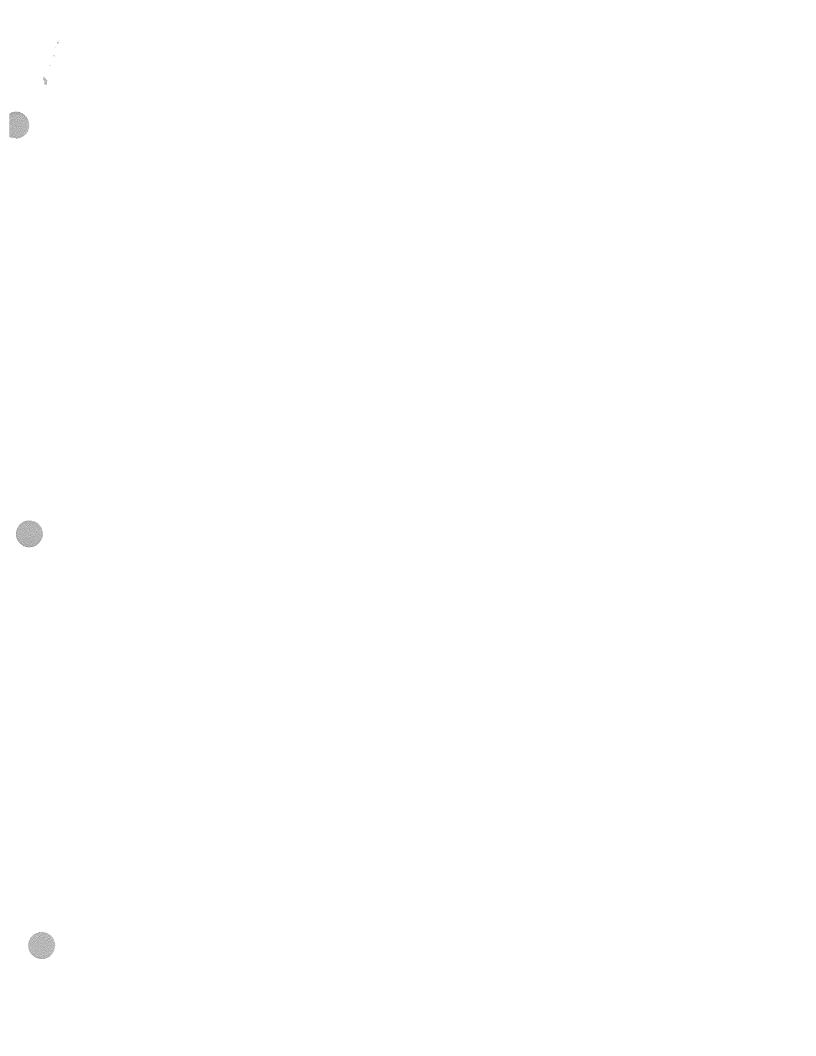


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Highland Central School District

Student Services Office



Highland Central School District

Special Board Meeting Minutes

Board of Education Meeting
Wednesday, November 13, 2013
7:00 pm Regular Meeting followed by Community Forum
To be Held in AUDITORIUM At High School

MEETING AVAILABLE LIVESTREAM ON WEBSITE

ATTENDEES:

Board Members Present: Alan Barone, Sue Gilmore, Tom Miller, Kim Sweeney, Mike Bakatsias (7:48 pm), Mike Reid, Debbie Pagano

Administrators/Directors Present: Deborah Haab, Superintendent of Schools; Sarah Dudley-Lemek, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; Carol Potash, Director of Technology; Pete Miller; Director of Buildings and Grounds; Pete Watkins, Director of Athletics; Debbie Tompkins, Assistant Director of Transportation; Maria McCarthy, Food Services Director; Pete Harris, High School Principal; Joel Freer, Elementary School Principal; Rosann LaManna, Elementary School Assistant Principal

APPOINTMENT OF CLERK PRO TEMPORE

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education appoints Louise M. Lynch as Clerk Pro Tempore for Board meeting held today, November 13, 2013.

Motion made at 7:06 pm by Kim Sweeney; Second by Mike Bakatsias; Motion carried with a 7-0 vote.

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE (7:06 pm)

Board President, Alan Barone, called meeting to Order at 7:06 and then the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Motion made at 7:06 pm by Kim Sweeney; Second by Mike Bakatsias; Motion carried with a 7-0 vote.

COMMUNITY FORUM

A power point presentation regarding the Capital Project was led by Deborah Haab, Superintendent and the project team members from Ashley McGraw Architects, Pat Flynn, Nick Signorelli, and Ed Keplinger.

PERSONNEL:

a) Coaching Resignation

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, accepts the resignation from the following individual for the 2013-2014 winter season:

• Matthew VanVoorhis / JV Girls' Basketball Coach

b) Coaching Appointment

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the coaching appointment of the following individual for the 2013-2014 winter season:

• Stephen Delmar / JV Girls Basketball / Stipend \$2,453

c) Tenure Appointment

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the tenure appointment for the following individual as follows:

• Dana Wood / Tenure Area - Teaching Assistant / Effective November 18, 2013

Motion made by Tom Miller; Second by Debbie Pagano; Discussion: none; Motion carried unanimously with a 7-0 vote.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The floor was open for public comments. A small number of community members expressed their questions and/or concerns to the Board regarding the Capital Project.

Motion made by Kim Sweeney at 8:08 pm to adjourn meeting; Second by Tom Miller; Motion carried unanimously with 7-0 vote.

ADJOURNMENT

Minutes recorded by Louise Lynch (Clerk Pro Tempore) Minutes submitted by Lisa M. Cerniglia (District Clerk)

Highland Central School District Claims Auditor Log July 2013 - June 2014

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Highland Central School District - 2013- 2014

Warrants Approved - October 2013

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Highland Central School District - 2013- 2014

Warrants Approved - November 2013

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OFFICE OF P-12 EDUCATION: Office of Special Education ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER Room 301M EB, 89 Washington Avenue • Albany, NY 12234 www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/

Telephone (518) 402-3353 Fax: (518) 402-3534

December 2013

SPECIAL EDUCATION FIELD ADVISORY

FROM:

James P. DeLorenzo

SUBJECT:

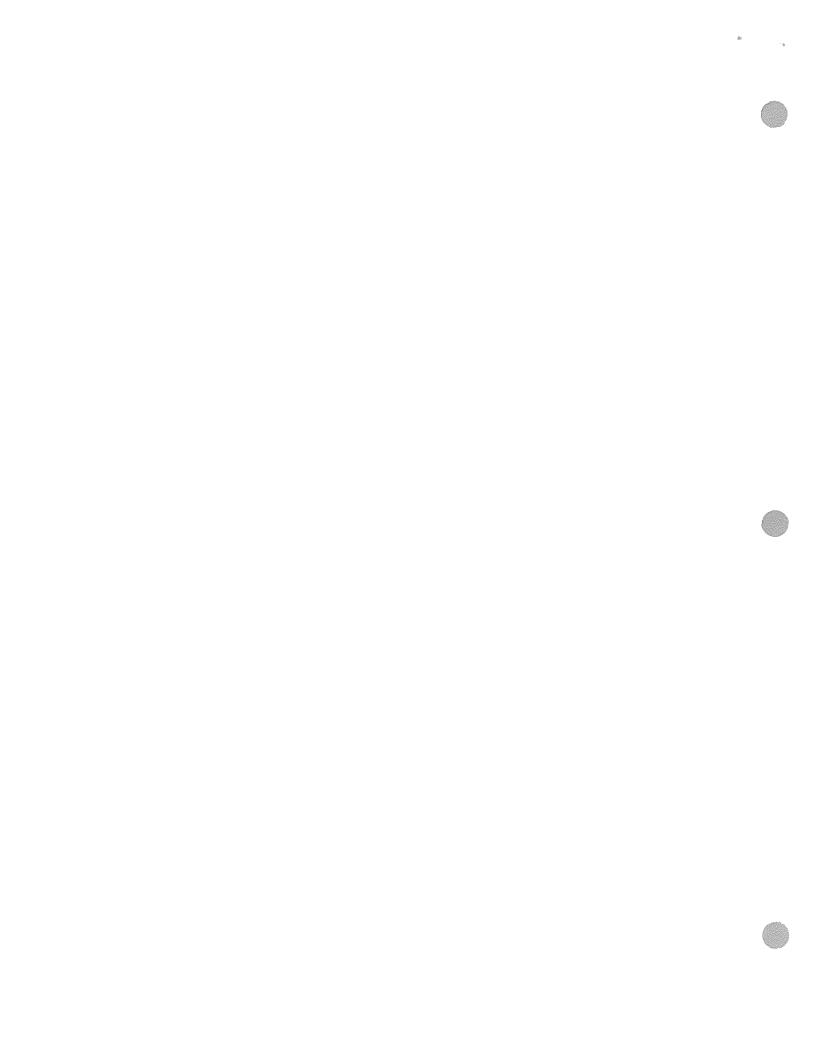
New Requirements for Special Education Programs and Services: Amendment to Sections 200.3 and 200.5 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education Relating to Chapter 213 of the Laws of 2013 (Effective December 4, 2013)

Jame P. Dorugo

This memorandum is to inform you that the Board of Regents has approved for permanent adoption the amendment of sections 200.3 and 200.5 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education. The amendment conforms State regulations to Chapter 213 of the Laws of 2013 relating to the additional parent member of a committee on preschool special education (CPSE). The amendment also makes a technical amendment to ensure consistency with the terminology used in section 4402(1)(b)(1)(b) of Education Law relating to the meeting notice for meetings of the committee on special education (CSE). The effective date of the amendment is December 4, 2013. However, the requirements relating to the additional parent member of a CPSE have been in effect since the Governor signed Chapter 213 into law on July 31, 2013. A copy of the full text of the amended regulations can be found at http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2013Meetings/November2013/1113p12a1.pdf.

To ensure dissemination to appropriate individuals within a school district, I ask Superintendents to please share this memorandum with individuals such as Directors of Special Education, School Psychologists, CSE and CPSE Chairpersons, Guidance Counselors, Directors of Pupil Personnel and Parent Teacher Associations. Questions regarding this memorandum may be directed to the Special Education Policy Unit at 518-473-2878 or to the Special Education Quality Assurance Office in your region:

Central Regional Office	(315) 428-4556
Eastern Regional Office	(518) 486-6366
Hudson Valley Regional Office	(518) 473-1185
Long Island Regional Office	(631) 952-3352
New York City Regional Office	(718) 722-4544
Western Regional Office	(585) 344-2002
Nondistrict Unit	(518) 473-1185



Supreme Court To Consider What Defines Intellectual Disability

By Maggie Clark, Stateline

December 10, 2013

How should states decide if someone convicted of a crime has an intellectual disability, when the answer means life or death? This spring the Supreme Court will wade back into these murky waters, 12 years after it took the death penalty off the table for criminals with mental disabilities but left the details to the states.

In its 6-3 decision in Atkins v. Virginia, authored by Justice John Paul Stevens, the court prohibited states from executing anyone with "mental retardation." Mental health professionals define it as substantial limitations in intellectual functions such as reasoning or problem-solving, limitations in adaptive behavior or "street smarts," and evidence of the condition before age 18. (Mental retardation is the term used in law, but most clinicians and The Associated Press refer to the condition as intellectual disability.)

After the decision, most states stuck with the three-pronged clinical definition, but Florida, Georgia, Mississippi and Texas set their own standards. Under Florida's law, if you have an IQ over 70, you're eligible for execution regardless of intellectual function or adaptive behavior.

Freddie Lee Hall, who has been on Florida's death row for more than 30 years and scored in the mid-70s on IQ tests, is arguing the state's standard amounts to unconstitutional punishment.

Most likely, the case won't result in a dramatic shift in national criminal justice policy, but will further clarify who should and should not be eligible for execution, said Ronald Tabak, an attorney who has represented multiple clients with intellectual disabilities and chairs the American Bar Association's death penalty committee.

"There is no reason to think that the court is taking this case because the court loves that Florida is going against the norms of the mental health field," Tabak said. "The more likely reason they granted (judicial review) is ...to say there are certain basic things about intellectual disability that you can't exclude from consideration."

That's not the way Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi sees it. The Atkins decision, she wrote in her brief to the Supreme Court, "expressly left the task of defining retardation to the states," and Florida is free to adopt its own standard for determining who has an intellectual disability.

"Freddie Lee Hall faces a death sentence for the 1978 murder of Karol Hurst, and Florida courts have found that he is not intellectually disabled," said Bondi. "We will urge the U.S. Supreme Court to uphold Hall's sentence."

The court's makeup has shifted since the 2002 Atkins decision. But if the justices split along ideological lines, the vote could favor Hall, assuming that swing vote Justice Anthony Kennedy sides with Hall, as he did with Atkins in 2002. Arguments are set for March 3.

Similar cases are percolating beyond Florida. In Georgia, death row inmate Warren Hill is fighting execution based on substantial evidence that he has an intellectual disability. In Texas, where the courts use an anecdotal seven-part test largely based on the characteristics of the fictional character Lennie from

John Steinbeck's novel "Of Mice and Men" to determine intellectual disability, multiple prisoners have been executed in recent years even when they've scored well below 70 on IQ tests.

Last year, Texas executed Marvin Wilson, who was convicted of murder in 1994; his IQ ranged from 61 to 79 on tests. In 2010, Virginia executed Teresa Lewis for her role in a murder-for-hire scheme, even though she had an IQ of 72 and her co-conspirators admitted Lewis did not plan the murder.

These are the types of cases advocates want the Supreme Court to revisit. "It's our hope that the court will clarify that states must use the clinical definition for intellectual disability...not only for current cases but for future cases, too," said Margaret Nygren, executive director and CEO of the American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

Borderline Cases

Freddie Lee Hall was convicted of co-planning and carrying out the murder of 21-year-old Karol Hurst in Leesburg, Fla., in 1978. After spending the day scouting the parking lot of a local grocery store with his partner, Mack Ruffin, Hall forced Hurst, who was seven months pregnant, into her car and drove her into the woods. There, Ruffin sexually assaulted and shot Hurst. A jury convicted Hall of first-degree murder for his role in the murder scheme.

Since Hall was sentenced to death in 1981, he has made multiple appeals based on his low IQ, which varied from 71 to 80 depending on the tests and their margins of error.

"He has been the same ever since I've known him, and he has the mind of a child," said his attorney, Eric Pinkard, who has been working with Hall since 1999.

In multiple hearings to prove his intellectual disability, Hall's family and longtime friends testified about Hall's struggles with reading, writing and caring for himself and recounted how Hall experienced abuse, starvation and torture as a child. The Florida courts decided that even though Hall had limits in functioning and adaptive behavior, because his IQ scores were not below 70, Hall did not have an intellectual disability and could be executed.

It's these borderline cases where the individual state implementations matter, said Nygren. "Intellectual disability, like genius, is on a continuum," Nygren said. "It's challenging for states to legislate that this person is 'in' or 'out.""

Still, the court shouldn't wade too much into the specifics of setting protocols to define intellectual disability, said Kent Scheidegger, legal director of the Criminal Justice Legal Foundation, which advocates for victims of crime.

"If the Supreme Court gets into issues like these and declares them to be federal constitutional mandates," Scheidegger said, "we will have a long stretch of litigation as the high court resolves one issue after another, never reaching the end."

Making that determination is generally subject to clinical judgment, said Nygren. "Clinicians must pick scientifically valid tests that are culturally relevant and standardized, but also individualized," Nygren said. "For instance, if someone's been in jail for last five years, it's hard to evaluate if they're good at managing money since they don't have money to manage. That's where clinical judgment comes in."

Beyond IQ tests, the disability manifests in limitations in learning and reasoning, and difficulty with social skills, personal care and language. These factors are just as relevant as an IQ test score, which, said Nygren, "is never going to give you 100 percent (certainty), even though that's the expectation placed on the test."

Advocates like Nygren want the court to require states to pay more attention to margins of error when determining intellectual disability. Leaving the determination of mental disability to the states, "has given states a lot of leeway to do mischief with the definition of intellectual disability," said Brian Kammer, executive director of the Georgia Resource Center, which provides free legal services for death row inmates.

For instance, Georgia requires defendants to prove their intellectual disability "beyond a reasonable doubt," the highest standard of proof in the criminal justice system. Georgia is the only state that requires such a high burden of proof and the legislature is considering lowering the standard in the next legislative session.

Death Sentences Down

Still, the Atkins decision has had an impact on executions. At least 98 people have had their death sentence changed since 2002 by proving that they had an intellectual disability, according to data from the Death Penalty Information Center. By their count, in the 18 years before the Atkins decision, at least 44 people who likely suffered from intellectual disabilities were executed.

Nationally, states are carrying out fewer death sentences than they have since the penalty was reinstated in 1976. So far in 2013, 36 people have been executed in nine states. In 2012, 43 people were executed in nine states.

Stateline is a nonpartisan, nonprofit news service of the Pew Charitable Trusts that provides daily reporting and analysis on trends in state policy.