

Board of Education Minutes  
May 8, 2019

**DRAFT**

A regular meeting of the North Stonington Board of Education was held on Wednesday, May 8, 2019, at 7:00 p.m. in the Central Office/Elementary School Shaw Media Center. Present were Mrs. Wagner, Mr. Karpinski, Mr. Mathwich, Ms. Welborn, Mr. McCord, Dr. Potemri, and Mr. Mendolia. Also present were Mr. Nero, Mrs. Martin, Mrs. Costa, Mrs. Wilkison, Mrs. St. Germain, and Mr. Chaney. Chairperson Wagner called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance – The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. A moment of silence was observed in respect to the victims of the shooting at the STEM school in Colorado.

On a motion by Ms. Welborn, seconded by Mr. McCord, the Board voted unanimously to move Item 11a to Item 4a after Public Comment.

3. Proposed Executive Session – None.

Mrs. Wagner had comment on Public Comment procedures.

4. Public Comment on Agenda Items with Students Speaking First – Bryant Meyer, parent, had a question on discussing the results of the survey. Mrs. Wagner responded. Mrs. Helen Cassatta, parent, questioned why they are moving ahead if they don't have all the information and she elaborated. Mrs. Whitney Doran, parent, asked if they would be addressing the combining of busses. Mrs. Wagner replied there is still work to do on that. Mrs. Tanya Rivers, parent, had comment. Mr. Shawn Murphy, citizen, said there is a lot of confusion with people thinking there is going to be a vote tonight and elaborated. Mrs. Wagner said there is a lot to be reviewed tonight and the Board may decide to vote. Mrs. Kim Signor parent, questioned the start times. Mrs. Laura Mello, parent, said she understands the concept for high school and worried about a later end time for the elementary students and elaborated. Mrs. Jennifer Hirschfield, parent, commented that she liked the idea of a shorter school day. Mrs. Meyer commented and asked if the elementary time would be extended and Mrs. Wagner said nothing has been decided.

a. School Start Times – Mrs. Wagner read an introductory statement. She wanted to give an overview for those in attendance. She reviewed the timeline of events. She explained what was in the rest of the packet handed out to the Board. Mrs. Wagner reviewed highlights of the survey. She spoke of the modified block schedule due to start next school year. She commented the block schedule change was in the works long before this study. Athletics was also a concern and they talked to Ellen Turner, the athletic director, who felt it was do-able with a school end time of 2:30 or earlier due to some of the distances traveled. She elaborated. Mrs. Wagner reviewed transportation concerns. The last handout was the scenarios that were discussed during the process. Mr. Karpinski commented on the other districts that have done this. He had a concern about not getting feedback from all the

stakeholders. He elaborated. He would like to see a detailed report and listed what he would like in that report. If a vote is taken for phase one, he would like to see some sort of study to see if it's working. Mr. Mendolia had comment on some of the scenarios. Mrs. Wagner said we are doing this in phases because change is difficult and she elaborated. She said this may not be the right thing in the long run but they can say they did what is right for their students. Ms. Welborn commented that science is behind this. She said according to the survey, most people were in favor of it and gave examples. Mr. McCord commented on starting later and didn't think that was a bad thing. Board members had comment. Mr. McCord didn't think this would have a huge impact. Mr. Mathwich concurred with previous comments. Mr. Mathwich made a motion that was seconded by Dr. Potemri to have the middle/high school start at 7:45 a.m. and end at 2:2 p.m. beginning in the 2019-2020 school year. Dr. Potemri had comment on student attendance at her school which starts at 9:00 a.m. and said it is a difference-maker. She elaborated. She said she looks at research and facts and had further comment. Mr. Karpinski hopes there is a detailed plan going forward. There was further discussion. The motion passed with six voting in favor and one opposed. Mr. Karpinski opposed.

Mr. Nero encouraged everyone to stay and commented about the strategic plan. He elaborated.

5. Community Relations – Mr. Nero said the North Stonington Education Foundation meeting was moved to next week. The road race is coming up. He commended Mr. Marc Tardiff and Mrs. Jenna Rogers for their efforts.

6. Presentations – None.

7. Administrators' Reports – Mrs. Wilkison said it is SBAC season and they are doing the NextGen Science test. She commented on the science test and can't believe what they are asking of our students. She elaborated on testing. Thirty students participated in the Invention Convention with five going to the state competition and two of those have been invited to the national convention. She complemented Jane Servidio on her efforts. The Grade 4 and 5 classroom spelling bees are being held. The school wide spelling bee will be held after. May 21<sup>st</sup> is the grade 4 and 5 band concert and May 31<sup>st</sup> is the grade five chorus concert across the street. Mrs. St. Germain said it is a very busy time of the year. The prom was last weekend. She thanked Mrs. Wagner and State Farm for sponsoring Bobby Pitricelli to come talk to the students and she elaborated on the presentation. She said there are so many events happening that she attaches them to the email every week. Last night was the end-of-year band concert. Eastern Regions earned a platinum award for the band and chorus earned a gold award. Thursday is the chorus concert. The drama production starts May 17<sup>th</sup> and she elaborated. Mr. Chaney echoed what Mrs. Wilkison said about NGSS and it is mind-blowing. He said it will be very interesting to get the results back. SAT results are back. They haven't had much time to assess the results. He said most kids have maintained between the PSAT and SAT. He commented on safety and security and elaborated on the drills. The first whole-school lockdown was held with Gary Baran and Dave Greene in attendance and he had comment. Drills will continue to be held. Mrs. St. Germain spoke of students meeting about the Westerly Ed Center. Our students will be interviewing with EB. Freshman will be meeting on Pathways. Mrs. St. Germain read a list of students receiving honors. They are as

follows: High School Scholar Athletes – Seth Jones and Grace Anderson; State Governor’s Scholar – Lauren Rockwell; Mystic Chamber of Commerce Top Ranking in Senior Class – Sarah Spracklin and Lauren Rockwell will be honored for Top Ranking in Junior Class; and Middle School Scholar Leaders – Marissa Perkins and Sam Gionnati. She commended the staff during the Teacher Appreciation season and elaborated.

8. Administrative – a. Minutes – April 10, 2018 – On a motion by Mr. Mathwich, seconded by Mr. Mendolia, the Board voted unanimously to accept the minutes of the April 10, 2019, meeting.

b. Correspondence – None.

c. Personnel – Mr. Nero read a letter of resignation from Sarah Moseley. He read a letter of resignation from Emily Butterworth. He read a letter of retirement from Colleen Hawrylik. Mr. Nero said a math coach has been hired and he gave her background information.

9. Reports – a. Superintendent – Mr. Nero said we are about 90% on the punch list. He elaborated. He spoke of the asphalt being poured. They have been meeting regularly. He spoke of the landscaping. He said we have spent money on seed and grub treatment. He spoke of closing the fields and elaborated. He spoke of grub control. A lot has been done on the strategic plan and he elaborated. Mr. Nero spoke of the Say Something program.

b. BOE Chairperson – Nothing to report.

c. Committee Chairperson – Ms. Welborn asked about scheduling a policy review meeting.

d. LEARN Board of Directors’ Liaison – Dr. Potemri would like to step down from this position. It was explained what it entailed.

e. School Modernization Building Committee – Dr. Potemri said Mr. Nero covered most of it. A meeting was held with the architects on the acoustics in the band room. She explained there was some alteration in that room and elaborated. Mr. Karpinski asked Mrs. Turner about the fields being closed and she said everything was flipped and moved. She said the discussion started early enough so she was able to adjust the schedule. Mr. Nero had comment. Mrs. Turner had further comment and explanation. Mr. Nero said he had forgotten to mention that Bing Bartick had wanted to donate some of his artwork to the new building. He gave us about 50 pieces worth about \$10,000 and he elaborated.

10. Finance – She asked Mrs. Martin to print out where we are at the end of April and elaborated. She spoke of the tuition line. She asked the administrators to give them their absolute bare budget needs for next year. She elaborated. This will be covered at the next meeting.

11. Old Business – a. School Start Times – Covered above. She said she is excited to see how this works out. She would like to have a weekly meeting with the administrators to see how it is working. Mrs. Wagner got feedback on how to better get the word out. There was discussion.

b. Policy Review – Nothing new.

c. Web Site – Mr. Nero said our tech, Gabe Bryant, may be interested in doing the web site. He will be doing some research before he makes a decision.

d. Budget Discussion – Mrs. Wagner said town meeting was on Monday and thought it went well. She spoke of the referendum and said no matter the vote, people need to vote.

e. Board of Education Goals – Nothing new to report.

f. Board Members Concerns/Topics of Discussion – Nothing.

12. New Business – None.

13. Calendar – a. Future Meeting Dates – May 16<sup>th</sup> and May 18<sup>th</sup> are the next focus group meetings. The next regular meeting is May 22<sup>nd</sup>. Mrs. Wagner said three policies were in their packets involving budget. June 15<sup>th</sup> is a policy review meeting.

b. Committee Action List – None.

14. Public Comment – Sally Timmons, parent, commented on some other initiatives that were brought up at the meeting about broadening other healthy initiatives such as the amount of homework. Mrs. Wagner had comment. There was further comment. Mr. Butremovic, parent and coach, had comment on sixth grade sports for next year. They are hoping to keep sixth grade on the sports teams and he elaborated. He said they would not need to get out too early for some of the sports and he elaborated. He said he is just trying to look out for the student athlete. Mrs. Wagner asked questions. A citizen that used to run the soccer program in town had comment. Mr. Butremovic had further comment. Mr. Carroll, parent, said his middle school student missed the last period today due to sports and commented. There was further comment. Jen Richter, parent, had comment on her children playing sports due to the age cutoff. She commended the coaches and would hate to see her child miss out even for a year.

Mrs. Wagner thanked everyone for coming.

On a motion by Mr. Karpinski, seconded by Mr. Mathwich, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Roberta T. McCarthy, Secretary to the Board of Education