

Board of Education Minutes
June 9, 2021

DRAFT

A regular meeting of the North Stonington Board of Education was held on Wednesday, June 9, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom meeting platform meeting ID 818 7669 2118. Present were Mrs. Wagner, Mr. Karpinski, Ms. Welborn, Mr. McCord, Mrs. Mastroianni, and Mr. Mendolia. Also present were Mr. Nero, Mrs. Martin, Mrs. Costa, Mrs. St. Germain, Mrs. Reyes, and Mr. Cillino. Chairperson Wagner called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance – The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
3. Public Comment on Agenda Items with Students Speaking First – None.
4. Presentations – None.
5. Administrators’ Reports – Mrs. St. Germain reviewed upcoming year-end events. Five Wheeler students will be taking the sheet metals course at the Westerly Education Center this summer. She told the Board about senior project day and thanked all that have participated. The students are allowed to be unmasked at graduation if the ceremony is not over 1 ½ hours long and she explained. Mr. Nero said when people say we don’t have hands-on things for students, these five kids will be building a career on this; this is the direction we have been going in. He met one of the students that will be taking that course. Mr. Cillino said they had a fantastic grade six promotion today. One of the highlights was the speech given by student, Medoro Trombino, and Mr. Costanza’s rendition of “My Way.” Field day events have been going on this week and he explained. They have a step-up day coming up and he explained it gives the students a chance to go up to their next year’s class. He explained they would get to meet their new teacher and he elaborated. He had further comment. The summer school list is still being compiled. He thanked the teachers for all their efforts this year. He thanked the families of North Stonington for their support and the community for welcoming him aboard. He is truly happy to be here. Ms. Welborn said the step-up day sounds so cool. She had further comment on the program. Mr. Cillino said it alleviates a lot of the stress students have over the summer.
6. Administrative – a. Minutes – May 12, 2021 – On a motion by Mr. Karpinski, seconded by Ms. Welborn, the Board voted unanimously to accept the minutes of the May 12, 2021, meeting.

May 25, 2021, Special Meeting – Mr. Karpinski made a motion that was seconded by Mrs. Mastroianni to accept the minutes of the May 25, 2021, special meeting. There was comment. The motion to accept the minutes of the May 25, 2021, meeting passed unanimously.

June 1, 2021, Special Meeting – Mr. Karpinski made a motion that was seconded by Mrs. Mastroianni to accept the minutes of the June 1, 2021, special meeting. There was comment. Amendments were made to the minutes. The motion to accept the minutes of the June 1, 2021, special meeting as amended passed unanimously.

b. Correspondence – None.

c. Personnel – Mr. Nero said we received a retirement letter from Karen Lungren and Mr. Nero explained. There was further comment.

7. Reports – a. Superintendent – Mr. Nero said he is so proud of our administrators, teachers, and everyone. He is so excited that he is hearing we are going to be back to normal. We are in such a good place for our opening. Mr. Nero said Deanna Scanapieco is the chair of the teacher evaluation and professional development committee. The state is looking to make some changes to teacher evaluation. He had been in contact with our new state representative, Greg Howard, and he had comment. He will be meeting with the committee next week. Monday and Tuesday are professional development days for the teachers. We are having a staff get together on Tuesday for lunch. Mr. Nero said he is so excited we are going to have both our new schools in full use. Mrs. Costa told the Board she applied for and received a \$20,000 grant. She explained it will cover staff and she elaborated. The grant runs from May to September 26th. She said we are just finishing everything up. They are working on PPTs, summer school and starting to plan for next year. She thanked all the staff; everyone has stepped up to the plate and she had further comment. Questions were asked and answered. Mrs. Wagner said they really appreciated her applying for that grant.

b. BOE Chairperson – Mrs. Wagner said we'll talk a little about Saturday's meeting and where we go from there. She had further comment. She is having a hard time doing her full time job with everything happening and will be doling out some assignments. Ms. Welborn will be working directly with Attorney Littlefield on the policies and Mr. Karpinski will cover all correspondence coming in. Mr. McCord is the finance person. Mrs. Wagner said we'll see how this goes forward. Mrs. Mastroianni is still working with community-related things. We will still be looking at the strategic plan with lots more to come. She is excited to see the school year come to an end. Mrs. Wagner had further comment. She said even though we are going back to in-person meetings, we will still do them via Zoom as well. She said Mr. Karpinski is going to present the budget to the town on June 15th. Mr. Nero said regarding communications to the Board he asks that they first ask the person if they have followed the chain-of-command. He explained. Mr. Karpinski agreed.

c. Committee Chairperson – None.

d. LEARN Board of Directors' Liaison – Nothing to report.

8. Old Business – a. Board of Education Meeting Schedule – There was discussion. The schedule will remain as is.

b. School Re-Opening Plan – Mrs. Wagner said we need a basic re opening plan sent to the state by June 23rd. She said we had a task force meeting to review it. She said this is not the large plan. This basically is putting in parameters to the state. Mrs. Wagner explained the revisions the task force made to the document. Some of the

revisions made are we won't require masks, we will distance if needed, emphasize washing hands, there will be no more deep cleaning, contact tracing as required, no testing, we are not requiring vaccinations, we will make appropriate accommodations, and we are not supporting full distance learning next year. A Re-Opening Task Force meeting was scheduled for August 11th to look at the large document. Mr. McCord made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Karpinski to accept the document. Questions were asked and answered. There was discussion on items. Mrs. Mastroianni said there has been discussion amongst peers but also with teachers weighing in on vaccines at school. She elaborated. She spoke of the "trusted messenger" initiative regarding vaccinations. She explained the program. She was concerned that she is hearing from her students' teacher about healthcare regarding her children. She wondered where we stand as a Board. There was discussion. Mr. Nero said the purpose of that was for the community and he had further comment. It's unfortunate it's being discussed in school but we have been waiting for the vaccine for a year and he had further comment. Mr. Nero will send out a communication to the staff tomorrow. There was further comment and discussion. Ms. Welborn had comment and said the message to the staff needs to be carefully crafted. There was further discussion. Board members had further comment. Mr. Nero said that item was sent out because teachers are good messengers. He said where we draw the line is asking if they got a vaccine and if they didn't, why not. He had further comment. He said we will be clear with everyone and he gave examples of where we draw the line. There was further comment. Mr. Karpinski had comment on the re-opening plan regarding the masks and hoped the children that decide to still wear a mask are not made fun of and hoped the administrators would handle that. He had further comment on the plan. The motion to accept the document passed unanimously.

9. Facilities and Finance - There was a committee meeting prior. Mr. Karpinski said The April financials were discussed and the questions that were asked were answered. On a motion by Mr. Karpinski, seconded by Mr. McCord, the Board voted unanimously to accept the financial statements dated April 30, 2021. Mr. Karpinski said another item talked about was the use of the \$94,000 in the non-lapsing account. He reviewed the numbers for various items and requested they be moved forward for purchase. The budget will be presented next week. The May financials will be acted upon. Mrs. Wagner said they met with the stipend committee. She reviewed the items discussed during their meetings. They will revisit this the Tuesday before school starts. She had further comment.

10. Policy Review – Mrs. Wagner said we met on Saturday and explained the intention of the meeting. Attorney Anne Littlefield was consulted. Mrs. Wagner said when we started digging into the policies we realized we had a lot of work to do. Ms. Welborn said the plan was to share them with the Board at this meeting. The two policies at this meeting are 4111 and 5114. She also wanted feedback from the Board and asked how they felt about the administrators drafting the regulations. There was discussion. Mr. Nero said he had a conversation with Attorney Littlefield about the safe school climate plan and he elaborated and mentioned there are changes coming July 1st. There was discussion. There was comment about the discussion at the Saturday workshop. There was further comment. Mr. Nero had comment. Board members had comment. Ms. Welborn asked that once school was done to ask Mr. Cillino and Mrs. St. Germain to look at the regulation to see what they think. There was

discussion. Ms. Welborn will reach out to Attorney Littlefield about their policy process and do a comparison with CABE. The Board will read through policy 5114.

11. Calendar – Mrs. Wagner would like to have the next meeting June 28th at 6:30 rather than on June 23rd. There was discussion. There was discussion. Mrs. Wagner would like to have policy 5114 wrapped up at the next meeting.

12. Public Comment – None.

On a motion by Mr. Karpinski, seconded by Mrs. Mastroianni, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta T. McCarthy, Secretary to
The Board of Education