

Board of Education Minutes
September 8, 2021

DRAFT

A regular meeting of the North Stonington Board of Education was held on Wednesday, September 8, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom Meeting Platform meeting ID 874 7710 1041. Present were Mrs. Wagner, Mr. Karpinski, Ms. Welborn, Mr. McCord, Dr. Towle-Weicksel, Mrs. Mastroianni, Dr. Potemri, 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 6:33 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance – The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
3. Proposed Executive Session – a. Personnel – On a motion by Mr. Karpinski, seconded by Mr. McCord, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn to Executive Session at 6:34 p.m. and to invite Mrs. Martin into such session.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 6:55 p.m.

4. Public Comment on Agenda Items with Students Speaking First – None.
5. Presentations – None.
6. Administrators' Reports – Mrs. Costa told the Board a Pre-K parent informational session was held. The 3 and 4 year olds have started school and she elaborated. She said they will be getting more grant funding and explained. She thanked the Board for approving the hiring of the teacher at the middle school last meeting. Mr. Cillino said they had a successful opening. They have a very full building. They are up to 437 students with Grade Six at being the highest at 66. New family orientation and kindergarten orientation were held. A modified opening with Kindergarten was held and he elaborated. He said it was very well-received. Students can get into their routine better with the smaller groups. Mr. Cillino explained the modified sixth grade format. He explained the reorganization of grade six teaching staff. He reviewed the modified building schedule and that a daily intervention block was added that starts tomorrow. It is a dedicated 30-minute block every day. He elaborated. Due to grant funding, they added a part time reading specialist, full time math specialist and a full time paraprofessional. He explained how the virtual open house was run. On September 25th is an open house for the public to look at the school and he elaborated. Spirit Day is on September 24th and school pictures are on October 13th. He reviewed the safety protocols. He reviewed lunch procedures and some classroom setups. Questions were asked and answered. Board members had comment and thanked Mr. Cillino. Mr. Cillino had further comment. Mrs. St. Germain said she is grateful to for Mr. Cillino as well with the alignment of Pre-K through Grade12. She had further comment. They had a great opening of school. There were two really great days of professional development to start things. They did a lot of training on the modified block, Google training, suicide prevention and more. They are getting more students every day and said their enrollment is up to 335. Mrs. St. Germain told the Board they have five Voluntown students with class of 2025. They are already talking about next year's classes to come in. Back-to-

School night is tomorrow in person and she explained they are having different sessions to alleviate the number of people in the building. She said it is great getting back to normal including sports with spectators. The Chrome Books have been passed out and she elaborated. Mrs. Reyes said the main focus this year is social emotional. Mrs. St. Germain said over the summer they had their first diversity council in mid-August. Athletic directors, coaches, and parents are coming together with the ECC (Eastern Connecticut Council). They are very excited about that initiative. She explained how it was formed. She said it is a great collaboration moving forward. Mrs. St. Germain said students graduated from the Westerly Education Center's sheet metal program and we can send 4-5 scholarship students to the boat-building program. We had five students identified as AP (Advanced Placement) scholars with honors and she explained. School picture day is September 29th. The feedback from the parent survey was great on communication; however they received feedback that they like to get their information from social media. Mrs. St. Germain said they are taking that feedback and trying to move forward. Mrs. Reyes said the counseling department has put together a formal written curriculum including classroom instruction and working with our health curriculum and the counselors along with advisory on the signs of suicide. She said separate information will go out to parents and she elaborated. They are creating their own survey rather than using the state's program and she explained one of the reasons was it was a three year commitment but didn't start until February. Mrs. Reyes explained they have additional lunch waves and elaborated. She reviewed how they would trace students for quarantining and that they are following Ledge Light's recommendations. She explained how streaming would work in those instances. Mrs. St. Germain thanked them for the math interventionist position and she elaborated. Mr. Nero had comment on the administrative team and the concerns that were brought up about the realignment. He said they are doing a fantastic job. Mr. McCord thanked Mrs. St. Germain and Mrs. Reyes. He said it's great we are moving forward. He also thanked Mrs. Costa and had further comment.

7. Administrative – a. Minutes – August 11, 2021 – On a motion by Mr. Karpinski, seconded by Ms. Welborn, the Board voted unanimously to accept the minutes of the August 11, 2021, meeting.

August 25, 2021 – On a motion by Ms. Welborn, seconded by Mr. Karpinski, the Board voted unanimously to accept the minutes of the August 25, 2021, meeting.

b. Correspondence – Mr. Nero said he is in constant contact with Adam Burrows (Superintendent of Voluntown) and he elaborated.

c. Personnel – Mr. Nero said we have hired a math interventionist at the elementary school. Emily McCord is a Wheeler graduate and he gave her background. He said Mrs. Newton resigned and Madison Sylvestre, also a Wheeler graduate, will be taking her place.

8. Reports - b. BOE Chairperson – Mrs. Wagner said the CABA/CAPSS convention is in November. The Board went back to the Superintendent's Report.

a. Superintendent – Mr. Nero said they met with Jack Cross of LEARN to have them help us out with technology. They will meet again to go over the process. He said we had good press in the *Westerly Sun* on the Chrome Books. Last night was the PTO meeting and tomorrow is the education foundation meeting. The 25th is the elementary school open house for the public and he elaborated. It is from 9 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. He said the Board knows he keeps the Board Chair informed on items and he has been keeping her informed on the vaccine mandate and he elaborated. He had further comment. Questions were asked and answered. Board members had comment.

c. Committee Chairperson – Mrs. Mastroianni met with Mr. Cillino and they walked the grounds and found a very convenient spot for the tent and she explained. They will be using twenty-five 18” stumps for seating and she explained the setup. They will use twenty-five 26” stumps for desks. She met with Mr. Bruce to make sure there were not any other issues that they may not have thought of and there were none. No site work is needed. She had further comment. She got a call from the fair committee representative and he said that they would be happy to supply the students with picnic tables and she explained. Mr. Carocari said the fair committee was excited to be able to get the kids outside. They will be using the older tables and they will be ready on Monday. The last issue is the tents and she explained. She had further comment. Mr. Nero said the Westerly Community Credit Union has grants available for teachers and that may be an option. Questions were asked and answered. Mrs. Mastroianni will ask the education foundation about potential funding. Right now she wanted to make sure they have the go-ahead to proceed. Mrs. Wagner had comment. Mr. Cillino had comment. There was discussion on anchoring a large tent. Questions were asked and answered. Board members had comment. There was discussion.

d. LEARN Board of Directors’ Liaison – Mrs. Wagner said she has been talking to Mr. Mendolia about this and his schedule doesn’t allow his attendance anymore. She will be able to attend the meetings for now.

9. New Business – a. Superintendent Search – Mrs. Wagner said the Board decided their next step would be a workshop with CABE. They are looking at a 4:00 p.m. time slot next week and wondered if that was do-able. Dates were discussed.

10. Facilities and Finance – a. July 2021 Financial Statements – Mrs. Wagner had comment. Mrs. Martin had explanation. Questions were asked and answered. Grant expenditures will be added to the bottom of the financial statement. Mrs. Martin said the ARP-ESSER III funds have not been approved yet. Board members had comment.

On a motion by Mr. Karpinski, seconded by Ms. Welborn, the Board voted unanimously to add June 2021 Financial Statements to the agenda.

b. Mr. Karpinski made a motion that was seconded by Mr. McCord to approve the year-end financial statements. There was further discussion. There was discussion on the non-lapsing account. Mrs. Wagner asked the finance committee to meet before the next meeting to define for Mrs. Martin what they are looking for. There was discussion. There was further comment. The motion passed unanimously. (Dr. Potemri left the meeting.)

11. Policy – Ms. Welborn explained the background on Policy 5113 from CABE. The Board also received one that Mrs. Reyes revised. Mrs. Wagner had comment. Ms. Welborn had comment that the CABE policies are separate on the issues. Mr. Karpinski had comment and asked questions that Mrs. St. Germain answered. Mrs. St. Germain had further comment. Mrs. Reyes had comment on CABE’s policy and liked the state definition of truancy and she elaborated. She explained the item added to their revision. Mrs. Wagner asked if we wanted our policy to be what is in the handbook. Mrs. St. Germain answered. Mrs. St. Germain agreed that policy should be general and the regulation is more detailed. There was discussion. Questions were asked and answered on attendance. Ms. Welborn made a motion that was seconded by Dr. Towle-Weicksel to approve CABE’s policy 5113 on attendance and CABE’s policy 5113.2 on truancy. There was further comment. The motion passed unanimously. Mrs. Reyes said she has been looking at policies and some of the items now are outdated and they don’t use certain things anymore. Ms. Welborn had further comment. Mrs. Wagner said CABE is reviewing our policies and regulations and elaborated. Questions were asked and answered.

Bylaw 9221- Mrs. Wagner asked our attorney about any other interpretation; she said we are governed by minority recommendation. It is up to us as to whether we want to add that in to the policy. Board members had comment regarding appointing Board members when there is a vacancy and looking to the party chair for their recommendation. Mrs. Wagner will put something together and send it out to the Board. Mr. Karpinski thought we should get the best possible candidate. There was further comment. This will be voted on at the next meeting.

12. Calendar – Working on Thursday the 16th at 4:00 p.m. for the superintendent search workshop. There was discussion on a workshop for Board goals. October 23rd will be the goals’ workshop at from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. The meeting will possibly be held in person if they are able.

13. Public Comment – None.

On a motion by Mr. Karpinski, seconded by Dr. Towle-Weicksel, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta T. McCarthy, Secretary to
The Board of Education