

Board of Education Minutes
December 1, 2021
Special Meeting

DRAFT

A special meeting of the North Stonington Board of Education was held on Wednesday, December 1, 2021, at 5:30 p.m. in the North Stonington Education Center Media Center. The meeting was a hybrid format with those taking part virtually via Zoom meeting platform meeting ID 872 1656 6553. Present were Mrs. Wagner, Mr. Karpinski, Ms. Welborn, Mrs. Mazzella, Dr. Towle-Weicksel, Mrs. Mastroianni, Mr. Stefanowicz, and Mr. Mendolia (virtually). Also present were Mr. Nero, Mrs. Costa, Mrs. St. Germain, Mrs. Reyes, and Mr. Cillino. Chairperson Wagner called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance – The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
3. Proposed for Executive Session – a. Personnel – On a motion by Mrs. Mazzella, seconded by Mrs. Mastroianni, the Board voted unanimously to go into Executive Session at 5:32 p.m. for the Purpose of Personnel.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 5:54 p.m.

4. Public Comment on Agenda Items with Students Speaking First – None.

The Board moved to Personnel.

5. Personnel - Mr. Nero read a letter from Guy Boucher announcing his retirement from his position of maintenance supervisor as of December 3, 2021. Mr. Nero read a letter from Roberta McCarthy announcing her retirement from her position as administrative assistant to the superintendent as of June 30, 2022. Mr. Nero said we have hired a social worker, Cailin Sorder, who will begin on January 3rd.

6. Presentations – a. Culture and Climate-Mr. Nero said we started on this before the pandemic and he elaborated. JoAnn Freiberg and Pat Ciccone gave an overview of the program. Dr. Freiberg said North Stonington is ahead of the game. She said there are a lot of changes coming and she explained. She spoke of some of the issues facing schools. She said they worked with the staff for two days prior to COVID and she explained what they went over with the staff. Dr. Freiberg explained restorative practice and said it does work. When you work restoratively, you are helping kids work through trauma and other events in their lives. If you truly want kids to mitigate the learning losses the only way is through relationship building. She spoke of behavior and said it's not bad behavior, it's behavior that is asking for help. Restorative practice needs a lot of "myth busting" and she explained. Dr. Freiberg said this is not a fad; it's here to stay. They are thrilled and honored to be working with North Stonington. Mr. Nero thanked them for being here this evening and asked if they could return after the New Year. Mr. Nero spoke of the workshops held prior to COVID. Mrs. Wagner asked if they ever offered community members the opportunity to come and participate and Ms. Ciccone said they will make themselves available and

she elaborated. Mrs. St. Germain said they have talked to them about doing focus work with parents and with students; they have a two-year plan to move forward. She said it's a journey and everyone is involved in it.

b. FinalSite Web Site Presentation – Mr. Nero said one of the things we are trying to do is improve our web site. He gave a little background on the web site. Adam Reiser introduced himself. He said they do many other schools in Connecticut and gave background information on the company and said they are specifically for schools. He elaborated. They have over 2,000 total clients. Mr. Reiser explained the technical support available around the clock. He showed some examples from other school districts in the area and explained some aspects of the web site. He showed some examples of how items can be edited on the web site. Mr. Reiser said their software is secure and based on Google Cloud. He reviewed some of the security features. He reviewed the cost proposal and the different aspects of the proposal. He explained the pricing of the deployment and the annual software subscription. Questions were asked and answered. Mr. Nero had comment and explained some of the highlights of the system.

7. Administrators' Reports – Mrs. Costa said they had applied for ESSER 2 grant funds and said they were granted about \$60,000 and she explained what it will be used for. Mr. Cillino spoke of the quarantine learning model. He said most of the parents have opted out of any type of virtual learning and he explained. Teachers are posting videos for students and that has gone over well. He spoke of the percentage of students logging on. Teachers are still doing check-ins. He said it is very difficult to maintain the privacy of the student during live stream. Mr. Cillino said they hired a math specialist and a reading specialist through grant funding. He explained that in the lower grades they are finding it necessary to visit previous years' material. He reviewed the numbers of students and the grades the math specialist is servicing. He explained we are getting more students serviced with a second teacher. The reading teacher (grant) sees 19 students every day and he explained her schedule. She assists in professional development and other activities. He said that allows the other reading teachers to focus on the lower grade levels. He elaborated. He said we know this isn't a one-year fix and he elaborated. They have hired a full time per diem and looking to hire another part time. He explained the difficulty in covering classes and he elaborated. He was asked to report back in January about his coverage issues. Mrs. St. Germain explained they are not seeing the large scale quarantine like the elementary school is. Staff is doing a great job with the Google Classroom base and she elaborated. About 50% of the students take part when in quarantine. She said the teachers still touch base with all the students. She elaborated on the learning model. She explained that academically, they are seeing the same struggles, especially in math. Mrs. Reyes said they are so happy to have a full time interventionist and she elaborated. She explained the numbers of students being serviced and student need. She elaborated. Mrs. St. Germain had further comment. She suggested they send the Board the other information from that is usually contained in their report. Mr. Nero spoke of the drop-off and pick-up of the students at the elementary school and it is going well. He said we are only short one bus driver and he explained what happens when they can't get a spare driver in. He said the students don't have to leave early for athletics now and he speaks with Mrs. Buchanan regularly and he elaborated. Questions were asked and answered about quarantine. Mr.

Cillino explained about the numbers are a little lower due to the screen to stay program. Mr. Nero had comment. He said numbers are up everywhere and he elaborated.

8. Administrative – a. Minutes – On a motion by Mr. Karpinski, seconded by Dr. Towle-Weicksel, the Board voted unanimously to accept as a consent agenda the minutes of the October 13, 2021, October 27, 2021, November 3, 2021, November 10, 2021, and November 13, 2021, meetings.

b. Correspondence - None.

c. Personnel – Covered above.

9. Reports – a. Superintendent – None.

b. BOE Chairperson – Mrs. Wagner said the committees will report out in January.

c. Committee Chairperson – None.

d. LEARN Board of Directors' Liaison – None.

10. Old Business – a. School Re-Opening Plan – Mrs. Wagner said there is nothing much new to report. Screen to Stay is in place. Testing was discussed at their workshop and she elaborated. More information will be asked of Ledge Light Health District on that. There was discussion. Mr. Nero had comment. Mr. Cillino spoke of the contact tracing with Screen to Stay and then with the cafeteria setting and he elaborated. Mrs. Wagner will have Mr. Nero meet with the administrators about this.

b. Superintendent Search – Mrs. Wagner said there is an electronic survey out there for the community. Questions were asked and answered.

11. Student Success Committee – There will be a meeting next week at 5:30 p.m. and Community Relations at 6:30 p.m.

12. Calendar – Covered in Item 11.

13. Public Comment – Laura Mello, parent, pointed out we are increasing the chances of quarantining because of lunchroom situation. She had further comment. She was in favor of testing and she elaborated.

14. Proposed for Executive Session – a. Personnel – Covered above in Item 3.

On a motion by Mr. Karpinski, seconded by Mrs. Mastroianni, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 6:57 p.m.

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