

Board of Education Minutes

January 25, 2023

DRAFT

A Regular Meeting - Hybrid Format of the Board of Education was held in a hybrid format on January 25, 2023, beginning at 6:30 PM in the North Stonington Education Center. Present were Mr. Burdick, Mr. Karpinski, Mrs. Mastroianni, Mrs. Mazzella, Mr. Mendolia, Mr. Stefanowicz, Dr. Towle-Weicksel, and Mrs. Wagner. Also present: Superintendent Hopkins, Director of Student Services Alison Mullane, Wheeler Principal Kristen St. Germain, North Stonington Elementary School Principal Robert Cillino, Wheeler Assistant Principal Allison Reyes, Athletic Director Ellen Turner, Student BOE Member Madison Wagner, and Student BOE Member Jon Anderson.

1. Call to Order

Mrs. Wagner called the meeting to order at 6:32 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

4.a. Co-Op Sports: Ellen Turner and Student Athletes

Mrs. Turner shared that due to the small size of the district, the Cooperative Team Program is offered as an option to give Wheeler students choices for additional sports. Currently, the district has nine co-ops. Teams of 1, indoor track, you compete as a team of 1. We receive letters from the parents and students who are so excited to be able to participate in these co-ops. Mrs. Turner explained that she is in the process of applying to change her driver's license endorsement which will allow her to be able to drive a van in the Spring. Westerly Sun has done a great job of making sure that our Wheeler athletes are featured. Questions were asked and answered.

4.b. Fall Sports Overview: Ellen Turner

This year's Fall season was normal and as similar to what we've had for the past years. It was great to watch all of the spectators be available to attend the games, since for the past two years of not being able to be there. Girls soccer, we started six freshmen and the future is very bright. We had a little bit of divisional change. League is supposed to be of enrollment and competitive balance. We now have a division that is competitively balanced. Boys cross country - hung their first banner. this year we finished first. One young man that made state. Girls XC won again for the second time. The biggest surprise was the girls' volleyball team. It is great to see that our kids were coming out to support our girls. It was great to see almost one hundred and ninety-two people at Lake of Isle. Wheeler's pride was loud. Moving forward we have a great junior class who will be seniors next year. Mrs. Mastroianni thanked Mrs. Turner for always being at the school and for her support with all the athletic events. Mrs. Mazzella thanked Mrs. Turner for her enthusiasm and her hard work. Questions were asked and answered.

4.c. Special Education Presentation: Alison Mullane

The Director of Student Support Services gave a brief presentation on Special Education and 504 Laws and Regulations. The full presentation can be viewed on the recording. Questions were asked and answered. Mr. Stefanowicz thanked Mrs. Mullane for doing a wonderful job to be able to understand the program.

5. Reports

5.a. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Hopkins thanked his administrative team for their innovative thinking and for supporting the district's goals. Mr. Hopkins informed the Board that they have spent hours completing the School Wellness Policy Triennial Assessment Report that was due in June of 2022. Mr. Hopkins gave an indication of what the budget presentation will have; such as a PE teacher, paraprofessionals for the elementary school, a second social worker, woodshop supplies, staff for the alternative education program, and a District Curriculum Coordinator. He mentioned that Mrs. St. Germain has been

invited to attend the CAS Leadership for Learning on March 17 to facilitate a presentation on a topic that was facilitated in our district on expectations and actions that have enhanced the inclusion of our student-athletes.

5.b. Student Ambassadors Report

As reported by Ms. Wagner, at the elementary school, the drama club is still rehearsing for their play. The PTO had a fundraising activity, there was a STEAM night, and lots of K-12 research on the science of reading. Some teachers are beginning to have some professional development in the science of reading. This Friday the sixth graders will begin the DARE program.

As reported by Mr. Anderson, middle school and high school, mid-year assessments went well. NEASC accreditation meeting is coming soon. Wheeler is accepting applications for the Distinguished Alumni Award; the application deadline is February 15. So far nine freshmen student applications have been received from Preston and Voluntown for the next school year. The ECC has created a fan statement for the purpose of informing parents and fans that student games are not professionals and should not be treated as such and for the game to be a safe space for student-athletes.

5.c. Committee Chairs Reports

Goal #1 – Mr. Stefanowicz reported that the subcommittee met last Wednesday. Talked about policies that best apply to our goals. Talked about the idea of adjusting the equity and diversity policy to state that it was a Diversity Equity and Inclusion policy – DEI. Looked at hate crimes policy it should be distributed annually and should be referenced and have people access them. We could have a bolded reference and direct people to access them. We will continue on February 1st - and will continue discussing our next steps. Adjusting our policies to align with our goals. Goal 2 - we met afterward and also looked at other policies that are reflecting innovative instructions. We did not find those words in the policies and we will be working to align with goal 2 and had lots of discussions regarding our innovative

instruction and will be adding some line items to the budget. Having a discussion on how to evaluate the innovative instruction work within the district.

Next meetings are scheduled for February 1 - Goal 2 @ 5:30 p.m. Goal 1 @ 6:30 p.m.

Goal 3 – does not meet until February 22nd, at this point no updates.

5.d. BOE Chairman's Report

CABE webinar on February 9th - 12 - 1:30 p.m. Tomorrow at 3:30 the Para/custodial negotiations start. Budgeting - BOF will be inviting all of them to listen to tonight's meeting.

6. Old Business

6.a. Give Back Club Trip

Motion to approve the Give Back Club trip to Maine on March 28, 2023. This motion, made by Mr. Stefanowicz and seconded by Mr. Mendolia, Carried.

6.b. London Trip Addendum

Motion to amend the approved Travel Club trip to add a one-day travel to Paris during their London trip. This motion, made by Mr. Stefanowicz and seconded by Mrs. Mazzella, Carried.

7. New Business

7.a. Curriculum Coordinator Stipend Position

This will be part of the Superintendent's budget and you will hear on February 8th.

7.b. Therapy Dog

Motion to approve visits from the black lab Dune to our schools. This motion, made by Mrs. Mazzella and seconded by Mr. Stefanowicz, Carried.

Dune is a black lab and would love to spend time in our schools. The owner is willing to take the dog for visits and will fit with our Goal 1- safe, valued, and a sense of belonging. Dune has been invited to attend a BOE meeting sometime.

8. Public Comment*

None.

9. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 7:57 p.m. This motion, made by Mr. Karpinski and seconded by Mr. Burdick, Carried.

Respectfully submitted by
Irma Wilhelm
Recording Secretary to the Board of Education