

**NORWICH BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Norwich, Connecticut**

**APPROVED MINUTES OF:  
December 10, 2019  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING – BOARD OF EDUCATION  
KELLY STEAM COMMUNITY ROOM**

**PRESENT:** Dr. Yvette Jacaruso, Heather Romanski, Aaron Daniels, Mark Kulos, Patricia Staley, Kevin Saythany, Christine DiStasio, Carline Charmelus (arrived at 5:35 pm), Swaranjit Singh Khalsa.

**ABSENT:** None

**STAFF:** Dr. Kristen E. Stringfellow, Superintendent  
Dr. Thomas J. Baird, Assistant Superintendent  
Athena L. Nagel, Business Administrator  
Jamie H. Bender, Director of Student Services & Special Education  
Amber Rutigliano, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent  
Administrators, Principals and Teachers

**MEDIA:** The Day, WICH/WCTY

Dr. Yvette Jacaruso called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and a quorum was declared.

Dr. Jacaruso asked Al Daniels to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**MOTION:** Made by Al Daniels (seconded by Mark Kulos) to approve the amended minutes of the November 12, 2019 meeting. Motion passed 8-0; Carline Charmelus was not present at the time of the vote.

**MOTION:** Made by Tricia Staley (seconded by Singh Khalsa) to postpone the election of officers until after public comment until the full board is present. Motion passed 8-0, Carline Charmelus was not present at the time of the vote.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

None

**MOTION:** Made by Tricia Staley (seconded by Mark Kulos) to postpone the election of officers until after the Report of the Superintendent until the full board is present. Motion passed 9-0.

**REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT:**

Dr. Stringfellow reported on:

- Enrollment
- Recognition Awards: Alison Orcutt (The Key is Me), Cheri Danis (I Make a Difference) and Alysa Houtman (You Inspire Me)
- Assistant Superintendent Transition

- Retirement of Pre-School Director, Lynn DePina
- Key Stakeholders Meeting dates
- Update on NPS website re-design
- Shipman & Goodwin attorney rate increase
- Events Attended & Upcoming Events
- Griswold High School upcoming vote

Action Item to approve Griswold High School as a high school option for Norwich students was postponed until the January meeting for further discussion.

#### **ELECTION OF OFFICERS:**

**MOTION:** Made by Kevin Saythany (seconded by Carline Charmelus) to nominate Heather Romanski for Board chairperson. Votes were cast by paper ballots, all members voted for Ms. Romanski.

**MOTION:** Made by Tricia Staley (seconded by Singh Khalsa) to nominate Kevin Saythany for Board vice-chairperson. Votes were cast by paper ballots, all members voted for Mr. Saythany.

**MOTION:** Made by Heather Romanski (seconded by Mark Kulos) to nominate Carline Charmelus for Board secretary. Votes were cast by paper ballots, all members voted for Ms. Charmelus.

#### **BOARD REORGANIZATION:**

The Board reorganized to accommodate the new chair, vice-chair and secretary position changes.

#### **REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT:**

Dr. Baird reported on:

- All of state and federal grants have been approved with the exception of the Title IV grant
- Alliance Grant technology purchases
- Professional Development & Evaluation Committee (PDEC) met on December 9<sup>th</sup> to discuss updates to evaluation plans, recruitment plans, collaboration with LEARN and new teacher mentoring program
- Attendance rates have increased from 92.8% to 94.11% by changing the day before Thanksgiving to a day off instead of an early dismissal day.

#### **REPORT OF THE BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR:**

Athena Nagel reported on:

- **Food Service:** Awaiting metal flatware for five more schools, meals were down for the month of November and district registered dietitian attended a national conference in November
- **Technology Department:** Answered & resolved 235 technical requests for the month of November, Gaggle safety program installed, new devices purchased through Alliance grant
- **Facilities Department:** Mold survey conducted by Mystic Air at Moriarty school, updated on completed and ongoing projects
- **Business Office:** New Medicaid administrative assistant position for reimbursement purposes
- **Transportation:** Winter weather preparations underway

**Policy Committee:**

Next Policy Committee meeting is on March 25, 2020 at 4:00 pm in the CO conference room.

**MOTION:** Made by Al Daniels (seconded by Mark Kulos) to approve the following policies:

Motion passed unanimously

- Policy#1050-Community-Non-Discrimination
- Policy#4112-Personnel-Non-Discrimination
- Policy#4118.112(a)-Personnel-Sexual Discrimination
- Policy#4119-Personnel-Reports of Suspected Abuse & Neglect
- Policy#4152.6/4252.6-Personnel-Family & Medical Leave
- Policy#5131.8-Students-Bullying Prevention & Intervention
- Policy#5141.25-Students-Food Allergies
- Policy#5121-Students-Non-Discrimination
- Policy#5114-Students-Discipline

The following policies were presented for First Read:

- Policy #1331-Smoke Free Environment/Prohibition Against Smoking
- Policy #4118.231/4218.231-Alcohol, Tobacco & Drug-Free Workplace
- Policy #5118.1-Homeless Children & Youth
- Policy #5135-Physical Activity & Student Discipline
- New Policy: Series 5000-Sunscreen Application in School

**Board Retreat & Orientation Committee:**

The Board Retreat & Orientation Committee met on November 20<sup>th</sup>. There was 100% participation.

**Otis Library Liaison:**

The 11<sup>th</sup> annual Otis-a-Festival was held on November 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**NFA Liaison:**

Al Daniels reported that there is a new board at NFA and that they will make an effort to attend NPS Board of Education meetings.

**LEARN Liaison:**

Al Daniels reported that CABE presented at the last LEARN Board meeting. They discussed the Superintendent evaluation process, high school start times and an upcoming Early Childhood symposium.

**Board Reports:**

Heather Romanski reported that she attended the November CABE/CAPSS conference and the December Key Stakeholders meeting on December 9<sup>th</sup>.

Al Daniels reported that he attended the November CABE/CAPSS conference as well.

Singh Khalsa reported that he attended the November CABE/CAPSS conference as well.

Mark Kulos provided the Board with a list of attended and upcoming events.

Kevin Saythany stated that Beryl Fishbone has given the Board a packet of supplies for National School Choice Week.

**RECESS:**

The Board recessed to a “non-meeting” to discuss strategy or negotiations with respect to collective bargaining with the teachers’ union, administrators’ union, paraprofessionals’ union, administrative assistants’ union, custodians’ union, nurses’ union and food services’ union. Board recessed at 6:59 pm. The Board returned and resumed the public meeting at 7:17 pm.

**MOTION:** Made by Al Daniels (seconded by Singh Khalsa) to cancel school on April 28, 2020 due to the primary elections and add an additional day at the end of the school year. Motion passed unanimously.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**MOTION:** Made by Kevin Saythany (seconded by Al Daniels) to go into Executive Session. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board went into Executive Session at 7:38 pm. The Board returned from Executive Session at 8:57 pm. There were no votes taken in Executive Session.

**MOTION:** Made by Tricia Staley (seconded by Singh Khalsa) to authorize Shipman & Goodwin, LLP, in consultation with the Superintendent, to engage a forensic auditor to review financial issues related to participation and payment related to retiree insurance benefits and to provide recommendations related to protocols and procedures for these issues. The Board authorizes the Superintendent to expend funds up to \$24,000 for this purpose. Motion passed unanimously.

**MOTION:** Made by Mark Kulos (seconded by Kevin Saythany) to approve the Memorandum of Understanding with the nurses’ union. Motion passed unanimously.

**MOTION:** Made by Patricia Staley (seconded by Al Daniels) to approve the Memorandum of Understanding with the paraprofessionals’ union. Motion passed unanimously.

**MOTION:** Made by Mark Kulos (seconded by Singh Khalsa) to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:57 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Carline Charmelus*

Carline Charmelus,  
Secretary