

**NORWICH BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Norwich, Connecticut**

**APPROVED MINUTES OF:  
March 10, 2020  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING – BOARD OF EDUCATION  
KELLY STEAM COMMUNITY ROOM**

**PRESENT:** Heather Romanski, Aaron Daniels, Mark Kulos, Patricia Staley, Kevin Saythany, Christine DiStasio, Carline Charmelus, Swaranjit Singh Bhatia, Dr. Yvette Jacaruso

**ABSENT:** None

**STAFF:** Dr. Kristen E. Stringfellow, Superintendent  
Athena L. Nagel, Business Administrator  
Amber Rutigliano, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

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

Heather Romanski called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and a quorum was declared.

Mrs. Romanski asked Swaranjit Singh Bhatia to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**MOTION:** Made by Dr. Yvette Jacaruso (seconded by Mark Kulos) to approve the minutes of the February 4, 2020 meeting. Motion passed 9-0.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Anjali Beasley of 14 Elwood Lane addressed the Board regarding the uniform policy. She doesn't feel that uniforms are needed any longer to prevent bullying because no one in her school is being bullied because of uniforms. She feels they do more harm than good and prevent self-expression.

Mayor Peter Nystrom, of 36 Laurel Heights Road addressed the Board regarding a letter he had written and given to the Budget Expenditure Committee. He wants the Board and the City to move forward and work together during budget discussions. He urged the Board to consider the taxpayers needs as well as the long and short term budget effects.

**REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON:**

Heather Romanski reported that she and Dr. Stringfellow met with the NFA Chair of the Board of Trustees concerning the NFA contract. He was going to present the draft changes to their negotiation committee. To date, they have not heard back from NFA regarding the changes.

Chair Romanski also reported that she and Dr. Stringfellow attended the Strategic Planning session with the City Council and Norwich department heads.

**REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT:**

Dr. Stringfellow reported on:

- Board of Education Appreciation Month
- Recognition Awards: Diane Egger (The Key is Me), Sarah Brown (I Make a Difference) and Kiara Cruz (You Inspire Me)
- COVID-19 updated information
- Norwich Public Schools 20-21 school calendar presented for first read to the Board
- Magnet school registration updates
- Residency investigation updates
- Upcoming budget meetings
- Events attended
- Upcoming events

Dr. Stringfellow gave a detailed presentation on the preliminary budget vote. This included recommendations to eliminate deficit spending and reliance on the City's fund balance while also planning to eliminate reliance on grants for operational expenses. A long-term strategic plan was presented to eliminate this deficit spending.

**REPORT OF THE BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR:**

Athena Nagel reported on:

- **Food Service:** Update on February meals served and update on metal flatware
- **Technology Department:** Answered & resolved 167 technical requests for the month of February, focus on cleaning of iPad and chromebooks, new chromebooks for Kelly
- **Facilities Department:** Completed projects, upcoming projects and Stanton gym/cafeteria floor update
- **Business Office:** Update on health insurance claims for the month of February, business office openings filled (HR Director, Payroll Manager and Manager of Financial Services), Munis training for ongoing issues, FLMA updates

**MOTION:** Made by Aaron Daniels (seconded by Patricia Staley) to postpone the action item for approving the 2020-2021 Norwich Board of Education proposed budget until the Special Board Meeting on April 23, 2020. Motion passed unanimously.

**LEARN Liaison:**

Aaron Daniels reported on the most recent LEARN meeting that he attended at the Ocean Avenue LEARNing Academy. LEARN is looking for support beyond 21 years old. Regionalism was discussed as well as creating minority teaching scholarships to aid in recruitment. A tour was also provided.

**Board Reports:**

Swaranjit Singh Bhatia reported that he attended Family Literacy & Art Night at Bishop School. He attended the NAACP Sweet Potato Festival and he attended the March 1<sup>st</sup> St. Patrick's Day parade. He also recognized March 8<sup>th</sup> as International Women's Day and March 14<sup>th</sup> as the Sikh New Year according to the Mool Nanakshai Sikh calendar.

Patricia Staley visited Stanton School and read to the Kindergarten students during Read Across America.

Kevin Saythany presented the Board with a copy of “Acts that Define Us” that he received from a volunteer at Otis Library.

Aaron Daniels reported that he recently made a visit to the Norwich Transition Academy.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

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

The Board went into Executive Session at 7:52 pm. The Board returned from Executive Session at 8:37 pm. There were no votes taken in Executive Session.

**MOTION:** Made by Patricia Staley (seconded by Swaranjit Singh Bhatia) to authorize the Superintendent to finalize and execute an agreement with a teacher and the Norwich Teachers’ League based on the discussion in executive session on March 10, 2020. Motion passed unanimously.

**MOTION:** Made by Aaron Daniels (seconded by Yvette Jacaruso) to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Carline Charmelus*

Carline Charmelus,  
Secretary