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Board of Education
Darien, Connecticut

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2017**

**PLACE:
DARIEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS'
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES
MEETING ROOM
7:30 P.M.**

TENTATIVE AGENDA

1. Call to Order..... Mr. Michael A. Harman 7:30 p.m.
2. Chairperson's Report..... Mr. Harman 7:31 p.m.
3. Public Comment..... Mr. Harman
4. Superintendent's Report..... Dr. Dan Brenner 7:45 p.m.
5. Approval of Minutes..... Board of Education
6. Board Committee Reports..... Mr. Harman
7. Presentations/Discussions:
 - a. Curricula Update - Dr. Susie Da Silva
World Language
 - b. Interim Progress Report..... Dr. Brenner
on 2016-2017 District
Goals and Objectives
 - c. Presentation, Second..... Ms. Marjorie Cion
Reading, and Discussion
of Proposed Board of
Education Policies: Repeal
of Policy 5140: Continuity
of Attendance; Revision of
Policy 5130: Student
Attendance and Truancy

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2017**

7. Presentations/Discussions (cont.)

- d. Discussion on Student..... Dr. Da Silva
Attendance Just Prior
to the February Break 2017

8. Action Items

- a. Personnel Items..... Ms. Cion 9:00 p.m.
 - i. Appointments
 - ii. Resignations/Retirements

9. Public Comment..... Mr. Harman

10. Adjournment..... Mr. Harman

DB:nv
February 23, 2017

APPROVED
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Tuesday, January 24, 2017

PLACE:
DARIEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES
BOARD OF EDUCATION CONFERENCE ROOM
7:30 P.M.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

	<i>Burke</i>	<i>Dineen</i>	<i>Hagerty-Ross</i>	<i>Harman</i>	<i>McCammon</i>	<i>McNamara</i>	<i>Ochman</i>	<i>Stein</i>	<i>Zuro</i>
Present	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Absent									

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT:

Dr. Brenner, Dr. Da Silva, Ms. Klein, Ms. Cion, and Mr. Feeney.

AUDIENCE: *Approximately 40*

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Call to Order | Mr. Harman, Chair, at
7:33 p.m. (0:00) |
| 2. Chairperson's Report | Mr. Harman at 7:33 (0:00) |
| 3. Public Comment | Mr. Harman at 7:35 (0:02) |
|
Ms. Sue Hayes, 6 Tanglewood Trail (Written Remarks Attached)
Ms. Catherine Piorkowski, 152 Old Kings Highway North (Written Remarks attached)
Mr. Rob Dyer, 2 McLaren South
Ms. Linda Straubel, 1640 Post Road (Written Remarks Attached) | |
| 4. Superintendent's Report | Dr. Brenner at 7:47 (0:14) |
| 5. Approval of Minutes (Attachments) | Board of Education at 7:48 (0:15) |

**MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING AND EXECUTIVE SESSION HELD ON
JANUARY 10, 2017:**

1st Ms.Stein

2nd Ms. Hagerty-Ross

	<i>Burke</i>	<i>Dineen</i>	<i>Hagerty-Ross</i>	<i>Harman</i>	<i>McCammon</i>	<i>McNamara</i>	<i>Ochman</i>	<i>Stein</i>	<i>Zuro</i>
Yes	X	x	x	x		x		x	x
No									
Abstain					x		x		

RESULT -MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (7-0-2)

MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 10, 2017:

1st Mr. Dineen

2nd Mr. Burke

	<i>Burke</i>	<i>Dineen</i>	<i>Hagerty-Ross</i>	<i>Harman</i>	<i>McCammon</i>	<i>McNamara</i>	<i>Ochman</i>	<i>Stein</i>	<i>Zuro</i>
Yes	X	x	x	x		x		x	x
No									
Abstain					x		x		

RESULT -MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (7-0-2)

6. Board Committee Reports

Mr. Harman at 7:49 (0:16)

PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

7. Presentations

a Meeting with RTM Finance and Budget and Education Committees re 2017-2018 Proposed Board of Education Budget

Mr. Harman at 7:49 (0:16)

Comments and Questions

Ms. Debra Ritchie, Vice Chair Finance and Budget, RTM (Written Remarks Attached)
Mr. Dennis Maroney, Chair Education Committee, RTM (Written Remarks Attached)

b. Discussion and Action on Annual Report on High School Temporary Stadium Lights to the Planning and Zoning Commission (Attachment)

Dr. Brenner and Mr. Manfredonia at 8:03 (0:30)

MOTION TO APPROVE THE ANNUAL REPORT ON HIGH SCHOOL TEMPORARY STADIUM LIGHTS TO THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION:

1st Mr. Burke

2nd Ms. Zuro

	<i>Burke</i>	<i>Dineen</i>	<i>Hagerty-Ross</i>	<i>Harman</i>	<i>McCammon</i>	<i>McNamara</i>	<i>Ochman</i>	<i>Stein</i>	<i>Zuro</i>
Yes	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
No									
Abstain									

RESULT -MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0-0)

c. Further Discussion and Possible Action on Proposed New Courses for Darien High School for the 2017-2018 School Year

Dr. Da Silva at 8:05 (0:32)

MOTION TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED NEW COURSES FOR DARIEN HIGH SCHOOL FOR THE 2017-2018**SCHOOL YEAR :****1st Ms. McNamara****2nd Mr. Dineen**

	<i>Burke</i>	<i>Dineen</i>	<i>Hagerty-Ross</i>	<i>Harman</i>	<i>McCammon</i>	<i>McNamara</i>	<i>Ochman</i>	<i>Stein</i>	<i>Zuro</i>
Yes	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
No									
Abstain									

RESULT -MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0-0)

d. Further Discussion and Possible Action on
Darien High School Cafeteria Expansion Proposal

Dr. Brenner at 8:08 (0:35)

e. Discussion and Possible Action on Board
Master Agenda - February through August 2017
(Attachment)

Dr. Brenner at 8:40 (0:57)

f. Follow Up Discussion on Unfinished Business
and Possible Modifications to 2017-2018 Proposed
Board of Education Budget (Attachments)

Dr. Brenner at 8:53 (1:20)

ACTION ITEMS**8. Action Items**

a. Personnel Items

Ms. Cion at 9:55 (2:22)

- i. Appointments
 - ii. Resignations/Retirements
 - iii. Leaves of Absence
- (Attachment)

MOTION TO ADOPT THE PERSONNEL ITEMS AS OUTLINED IN THE MEMO DATED JANUARY 24, 2017:**1st Ms. Stein****2nd Mr. Burke**

	<i>Burke</i>	<i>Dineen</i>	<i>Hagerty-Ross</i>	<i>Harman</i>	<i>McCammon</i>	<i>McNamara</i>	<i>Ochman</i>	<i>Stein</i>	<i>Zuro</i>
Yes	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
No									
Abstain									

RESULT -MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0-0)**9. Public Comment**

Mr. Harman at 9:56 (2:23)

Ms. Stacey Tie, 10 Clocks Lane
Ms. Courtney Darby, 23 Old Parish Road
Ms. Tricia Bresnahan, 11 Glenville Road
Mr. Jack Davis, 197 Hoyt Street

10. Adjournment

Mr. Harman at 10:01 (2:28)

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

1st Ms. Hagerty-Ross

2ND Ms. McNamara

	<i>Burke</i>	<i>Dineen</i>	<i>Hagerty- Ross</i>	<i>Harman</i>	<i>McCammon</i>	<i>McNamara</i>	<i>Ochman</i>	<i>Stein</i>	<i>Zuro</i>
Yes	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
No									
Abstain									

RESULT -MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0-0)

Meeting adjourned at 10:01 p.m. (2:28)

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Schneider Zuro
Secretary

Sue Hayes
6 Tanglewood Trail
DHS Parents Association Co-chair

I am here to voice concerns and express requests from the parent community at DHS on four brief points.

- 1) to ask the Board to put their full support behind the expansion of the cafeteria. Everything that can be done through scheduling, has been done. We are already not coping with the demand – the problem is being masked by the number of kids already eating in the chill zone, library, auditorium foyer, guidance or on the bridge. We question what the overcrowding might be if everyone did eat in the cafeteria, and whether there would even be a health and safety issue? With the current 7th grade on their way in, we ask that this project be moved forward quickly.
- 2) Please support the extra trainer. The level of speed strength and physicality on our sports fields is scary. Injuries happen, but it is vital that the correct immediate care is given to our athletes. This is a health and safety issue.
- 3) The more helpful, useful and valued a guidance department is, the more it is used by both students and parents. Guidance seminars, started 3 years ago with no extra resource, have built so much trust that kids turn to their counselors more and more. Guidance are on the front line – for emotional, academic and college related problems. We are very concerned about the counselor being split half and half between the high school and middle school. We do not think it is practical and we do not believe it is fair to the kids allocated to that counselor – we never know when a teenage crisis will hit, and do not want to have to hope it occurs on the half day their support is in the building. We consider this a mental health and safety issue, it would be a shrewd investment in our children and sincerely ask the board to consider giving each school a whole counselor.
- 4) We have heard differing views from teachers, unions and administrators on the matter of Departmental Chairs, so we would like to put forward what is really important to parents, regardless of what model is adopted. Firstly, to improve the consistency across the subject with a grade. No kid should be at a disadvantage because of the teacher he gets (content, grading, deadlines). Secondly we want to bridge the middle to high school gap and prepare 6/7/8 graders mindfully for the transition, demands and pre-requisites of high school. Thirdly, it seems to me that the best way to improve best practice within an academic discipline is to be evaluated coached and supported by someone understanding that discipline. I worked in the airline business and we would never have had non-pilots evaluating pilots. Furthermore, our building administrators need time freeing up. As PTO chair I have observed things being added to their schedule like running an advisory class or sitting in on all teacher recruitment interviews, but what tends to be lost is more time for strategic thinking and taking our high school forward. Finally, I would ask if all these departmental jobs are really the same size – of most

concern to us is the size of the special ed job. We would than in the field of special ed the middle to high school transition is less important than coping with the size of the task and would ask that the board consider giving one departmental chair to each school.

Thank you.



Council of Darien School Parents P.O. Box 2643, Darien, CT 06820

January 24, 2017

My name is Catherine Piorkowski. I am here tonight speaking on behalf of CDSP's Special Education Subcommittee. I have met with all the school representatives from MMS and DHS to discuss the proposed position of Special Education Chairperson. We would like to share with you a parent perspective on the role, based on our understanding of it from previous board discussions. We are not educators and, therefore, we will not attempt to prescribe a job description or the number of staff needed to fulfill the needs of this position. We speak as parents of children with special needs--and as such--we bring a valuable perspective to the struggles and successes our children face in school.

In general, there is support of administrative oversight that would:

- be geared toward helping the articulation between middle and high school
- provide supervision and enhance evaluation of special education teachers
- provide an additional touch point for parents
- assist in targeting and implementing appropriate professional development
- have the ability to do 'hand' scheduling to meet specific students needs

We feel there are other areas of student support that require additional oversight and/or development. Many parents see a gap between designing an IEP and implementing it with fidelity, which necessitates:

- Development of best practices and strategies for regular education teachers and special education teachers to work collaboratively to provide accommodations and instructional support as determined by the PPT
- Thoughtful creation of student teams where teacher and paraprofessional strengths are matched to students needs
- Further examination of the evaluation, training, and management of paraprofessionals
- and Administrative oversight of progress monitoring

Finally, one concern, shared by many, is the fact that this Chairperson would be handling PPTs. It is our hope that the building administrators will continue to play an integral role in PPTs. This seems to fit with the district perspective that building administrators are involved in the education of all students.

From: "Harman, Michael A." <MHarman@darienps.org>
Date: January 25, 2017 at 10:19:53 AM EST
To: "Hagerty-Ross, Elizabeth A." <EHagerty-Ross@darienps.org>, "Zuro, Sarah S." <SZuro@darienps.org>, "Stein, Kathrine G." <KStein@darienps.org>, "McNamara, Christa S." <CMcNamara@darienps.org>, "McCammon, D. Jill" <JMcCammon@darienps.org>, "Ochman, Tara" <TOchman@darienps.org>, "Burke, Michael J." <MJBurke@darienps.org>, "Dineen, David P." <DDineen@darienps.org>, "Brenner, Daniel" <DBrenner@darienps.org>
Subject: Fwd: BOE Jan. 24th meeting

Begin forwarded message:

From: MARK STRAUBEL
Date: January 25, 2017 at 10:11:47 AM EST
To: "MHarman@darienps.org" <MHarman@darienps.org>
Cc: "JMcCammon@darienps.org" <JMcCammon@darienps.org>
Subject: BOE Jan. 24th meeting
Reply-To: MARK STRAUBEL

Question to Board Of Education - January 24, 2017

Linda Straubel
1640 Post Road
Darien, CT

Mr. Harman,

My question is regarding the proposed new subject-area curriculum administrators for 6-12 grades. I would like to know if the Balanced Literacy Methodology currently in place for grade k-8, is being considered for grades 9-12 as part of an effort to align the curriculum between buildings. I have raised concerns to administrators in the past regarding the effectiveness of the methodology for the general education population as well as children with language based disabilities. In addition, as a new parent to DHS, I have also received many comments from teachers and parents particularly of 9th grades students implying or directly stating that students do not have the skill sets or depth of knowledge particularly in writing upon entering

DHS. Teachers in English and Social Studies have talked openly about the perceived deficit of their incoming students and their focus on helping student's develop the skill sets they were not taught in MMS in order to be successful in DHS. This knowledge deficit causes significant stress as well as makes the transition to high school extremely difficult for many students. Given my concerns regarding the MMS us of Balanced Literacy approach, I want to know if the new administrators will change the curriculum at the high school. My hope is that the DHS program continues as is and that DHS will not shift its curriculum to balanced literacy methodology.

My second question also regarding the proposed new subject-area curriculum administrators is whether they will review the current Balance Literacy methodology at MMS. I would like to know if the current methodology and curriculum in place prepares our children properly for the challenges at DHS and addresses the needs of our diverse population.

Best,
Linda Straubel

RTM Finance & Budget Committee

Comments for Superintendent's Proposed Budget for 2017-18 to the Darien Board of Education

January 24, 2017

The RTM Finance & Budget Committee would like to thank the BOE for this opportunity to present our preliminary observations and questions on the Administration's proposed 2017-18 education budget and capital budget. We recognize our presentation is prior to the BOE deliberations. We thank the Superintendent and all administrators for their hard work putting together this proposed budget. I would like to thank the members of F&B for their contributions to this process. I also would like to thank Jim Cameron and channel 79 for their support in providing our citizens with the ability to attend every Board of Education meeting virtually. Some of our schedules do not allow for attendance at every committee and board meeting so the ability to watch whenever we can is appreciated. I have especially enjoyed the pause and rewind functions.

Our annual disclaimer – our comments reflect the considered views of several members on this budget and we did not take a formal vote on each item. We are requesting formal answers to all questions. We feel the answers are necessary for an informed deliberation and decision on the budget by F&B and the entire RTM. In order to keep our public comments brief, we have provided in advance to the board a memorandum containing our questions and concerns. This statement will be a brief summary of that memorandum.

For the capital budget items, F&B requests more detail for the capital projects in the format as provided last year. We request that the Capital Projects 2017-18 Priority 1 descriptions memorandum be available so it can be distributed to the entire RTM well in advance of the budget vote.

Regarding the Superintendent's Proposed Budget for 2017-18 most of our committee discussion and comments pertain to the overall spending increase, cafeteria expansion, the additional of six department heads and the proposed Alternative High School.

The proposed budget for 2017-18 requests Education funding of \$95,751,137. That represents an increase of almost \$25 million over an 8 year period. During that same period of time, total enrollment has declined from 4,841 students to 4,806 students projected for 2017-18 school year. With the likelihood of state grants continuing to decrease and potentially be eliminated our committee continues to be concerned with the level of spending and the need for more efficient and effective delivery of educational services. Moreover Darien cannot participate in the sales tax sharing agreement with the state if our spending increase exceeds 2.5%.

Members of F&B would like to see an overall increase lower than the 2.03% proposed. Members of the committee believe that decrease to the healthcare cost is temporary and has a significant impact on the proposed budget. We are hopeful that additional cost savings can be realized during the BOE budget deliberations.

As we review the projected future enrollment, some on our committee feel that the cost for the cafeteria expansion is high. Currently the capacity of the cafeteria is 340 students. With four lunch waves, the cafeteria can accommodate 1360 students versus the current enrollment of 1356. The district is forecasting that enrollment at

DHS will peak at 1412 in 2019 or 56 more students than today. The proposed projects increase the capacity for the cafeteria between 80 and 96 students. This means for four lunch waves, the cafeteria could accommodate between 320 and 384 new students depending on the project, or between 264 and 328 more students than currently forecasted to be enrolled at the peak in 2019. Some members of F&B believe that the cafeteria expansion project is too big and too expensive during a period of uncertainty regarding state funding. With the unknown enrollment contribution of future town projects, we understand the need for additional capacity. Yet, we urge the BOE and superintendent to consider all the mentioned factors when selecting a final plan.

In the past new initiatives were presented to the BOE prior to the budget cycle. That allowed vetting and better understanding by the BOE, the community and elected officials that need to approve the funding. Since this did not take place for the Alternative High School and Department Chairs, we have questions and concerns that we outline in our memorandum.

Members of the committee expressed concern about adding another layer of management with the hiring of six department heads for the middle and high schools. F&B is always cautious about adding additional administrative staff due to the long term costs for the district.

In general, many on the committee felt that a more detailed overview of the budget impact and overall program is necessary before including the Alternative High School in the budget. There are still many financial implications surrounding the Alternative High School that are unknown. We look forward to the responses to our questions in my memorandum.

The total amount allocated to the ECR pool is at risk and this area needs to be monitored closely as more information is known in March.

We are concerned about the prospect of fully funding all varsity sports DHS offers. F&B requests that the BOE be presented with a full analysis with all considerations prior to taking any action on reducing the amount paid by parents.

We are glad to see that more progress has been made and the Building Conditions Survey has finally been completed. Our committee hopes that the progress will continue with a finalized plan for Ox Ridge and the other elementary schools in consultation with other town officials.

Again, we would like to thank the Administration and the BOE for this opportunity to present our thoughts on the Superintendent's proposed BOE budget for 2017-18. We look forward to working with all constituents during the coming months.

Respectfully submitted,
Debra M. Ritchie
Co-Vice Chairman
RTM Finance and Budget Committee

RTM Education Committee Minutes
18 January 2017

Members present – Dennis Maroney, Young Sup- Lee, Janet Grogan, Susan Morrison, Jay Hardison, Emily McDermott, Derek Lublin, JoAnn Sawitsky, Pam Sparkman, Sandy Savage, Shannon Silsby, and Lucy Fiore,
Members absent – Ed Washecka, Ann Reed, and Barbara Thorne,

Meeting was called to order at 8:02 PM and discussion regarding Board of Education Budget

Questions for Darien Board of Education and Administration 2017-18 Budget

Curriculum Supervisors –

- What are the metrics of success or failure of the new positions?
- If they will be doing teacher evaluations, which will free up Asst Principals, what more extra responsibilities will the Asst Principals be undertaking.
- We are confused as to how we are able to fund the positions – could we have a clarification of where the money comes from.
- Will the supervisor have mentor responsibility to younger teachers?
- We think at teaching only 1 class the supervisors will lose touch with students
- The committee believes that the continuity mentioned between MSX and DHS could be done by staff development.
- If the Supervisors position is approved will this rectify the differences in classes across subjects. Meaning there are teachers who get through all material for midterms and finals and others that lack so some students are not as prepared for the midterm or final.
- Question of teachers teaching too few classes. How do we compare to our DIRG of how many classes do teachers teach.

Cafeteria

- Cafeteria currently holds 340 students for 4 waves - 1360 total. The largest estimated class is 1412 so a difference of 52 students. Those 52 divided by the four waves is 13 students per wave. So either we can look at the additional total of 80 more seats will cost us at the cheapest option being discussed is \$18,000 per seat or the need of those 13 seats it will cost \$110, 000 .
- How often does every student in the school eat in the cafeteria every day? Many eat in chill zone, learning centers, coaches offices, or students being out sick that would limit the total number of students in the cafeteria at any one day.
- In the scope of the projects the faculty cafeteria is being removed. How many seats could that encompass? Can we get 15 per wave that would make the difference.
- Another thought is to use benches as opposed to chairs and tables with single seats. University of Michigan has increased football stadium seating capacity not by

increasing size, but by making seats closer together. Can we swap out chairs for benches?

- Also the space could be optimized. We understand this is difficult as the senior section would be difficult for a freshman to sit, but should be looked at how we can best utilize the space.

- Our biggest concern is the scheduling of the waves. We are not sure the most efficient scheduling is occurring. Also the waves are not being enforced. Teachers who are in wave 2 will not send children until wave four if they are having a test or lab. The understanding of the committee is first and fourth waves are crowded, but waves two and three are not. We are not sure that wave one of English, reading, Tech Ed, Wave two Math, music, study halls, learning center, third wave, business, world language, social studies and fourth wave art, core, PE, Science and video are the best ways to divide. Study Hall is not in the schedule and teachers are not abiding by the schedule. Either it needs to be better enforced or better managed and should not be the major problem that we are told. Why not determine which specific classes together add up to 340 and have those classes be a wave?

Alternative School

- What data suggests the need for this school?
- Does the cost grow over time or reduce spending for out of district students?
- What style of learner will benefit from the school?
- Busing or transportation costs?
- Food costs? Nurse? Guidance counselor? Custodians?
- Are demographics of Darien similar to other areas where there are alternative schools?
- Would a dyslexic school, similar to Windward, serve more students as well as reduce the \$6 million out of district student cost? And be a better use of energy and funds?
- We are confused is this a school for 6-12 or an alternative High School?

Technology deployment

- Do all students in HS need to have an iPad? Is there an opt out program if they already have a computer or an iPad?
- What is the screen time for younger students? Does this conform to Pediatric recommendations?

Substitutes

- Can we use interns to reduce the cost of Subs?
- What is the break down of long term subs vs day subs, vs Professional development subs?
- Is there a breakout of subs per school?

Athletics

- Can we have a breakdown of cost per sport
- Should budgeting for State Finals for every team be standard?
- Additional Athletic trainer we think is a good idea
- Maintenance for Athletic Dept is located where?
- AD role of being on campus and accessible to students and attend games?

Our committee would like the Board and Administration think of 4 elements when evaluating this budget, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Transparency and Innovation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:07 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Dennis Maroney

APPROVED
(as Corrected on February 14, 2017)
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Thursday, February 2, 2017

PLACE:

**DARIEN TOWN HALL AUDITORIUM
2 RENSHAW ROAD
DARIEN, CONNECTICUT 06820
7:30 P.M.**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

	Burke	Dineen	Hagerty- Ross	Harman	McCammon	McNamara	Ochman	Stein	Zuro
Present	x		x	X	x	x	x	x	x
Absent		x							

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT:

Dr. Brenner, Dr. DaSilva, Ms. Klein, Mr. Feeney, and Ms. Cion.

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Call to order | Mr. Harman at 7:29 p.m.
(0:00) |
| 2. Public Hearing on 2017 - 2018 Superintendent's
Proposed Budget | Mr. Harman at 7:31 (0:02) |

Speakers:

1. Ms. Shelly Skoglund, Leroy Avenue and Ms. Julia Mengwall, Tokeneke Trail, CDSP
2. Mr. Peter Orphanos, Raymond Street, CDSP
3. Mr. Ben Hayes, Tanglewood Trail, DHS Student
4. Mr. Jason Gaaserud, Driftway Lane, DHS Student
5. Ms. Liz Borecki, Fitch Avenue, DHS Student
6. Ms. Avery Brooks, Lake Drive, DHS Student
7. Mr. Alex Swift, Leroy Avenue, DHS Student
8. Mr. Robert Garrett, Stony Brook Road, DHS Student
9. Mr. Ben Olson, Little Brook Road North, DHS Student
10. Ms. Ann Dickson, Sunnyside Avenue, CDSP

11. Ms. Theresa Vogt, Circle Road, CDSP

12. Ms. Sarah Goertel, Brushy Hill Road, CDSP

13. Ms. Sara Parent, Hollow Tree Ridge Road, CDSP

14. Ms. Bridget Bepler, Lake Drive, Holmes Parent

15. Ms. Courtney Darby, Old Parish Road; Ms. Tricia Bresnahan, Glenvale Avenue; Ms. Wendy Hopper, Whaling Road; Ms. Linda Straubel, Post Road; and Ms. Kelly Dupont, Allwood Road, SEPAC

16. Mr. John Sini, Birch Road, Parent and P & Z Representative

3. Further Review of 2017 -2018 Superintendent's
Proposed Budget

Mr. Harman at 8:45 (1:16)

4. Adjournment

Mr. Harman at 9:10 (1:)

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

1st Mr. Burke

2nd Ms. Hagerty-Ross

	Burke	Dineen	Hagerty- Ross	Harman	McCammon	McNamara	Ochman	Stein	Zuro
Yes	x		x	X	x	x	x	x	x
No									
Abstain									

Result - Motion Passed Unanimously (8-0-0)

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sarah Schneider Zuro
Secretary



Council of Darien School Parents P.O. Box 2643, Darien, CT 06820

Good Evening. My name is Shelly Skoglund and I live at 139 Leroy. I have two children: one at the high school and one at Middlesex. My name is Julia Mengwall and I live at 13 Tokeneke Trail. I have three children: one at Middlesex and two at Tokeneke. Together, Shelly and I are co-chairs of the Council of Darien School Parents.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight. We would like to start by thanking the Board of Education for giving so much of your volunteer time to improve our schools and your dedication to the education of all our children. As stewards of our district, your efforts provide the oversight and guidance to keep our district moving forward and we appreciate all you do.

We'd also like to express our gratitude to our teachers, principals and everyone who works to make the Darien Public school system the wonderful place that it is for our children. In particular, we have to acknowledge Dr. Brenner, Dr. DaSilva, Shirley Klein and the entire leadership team that has been assembled over the past two years. We have been thoroughly impressed with their professionalism, commitment to excellence and genuine care for our children and our town. We have also appreciated your work with other town bodies, such as the Board of Finance and the RTM, to support district initiatives. Thank you all for giving of yourselves so tirelessly on our behalf.

To start, we would like to express our support for the Superintendent's proposed budget for 2017-18. As you will hear tonight, our members are enthusiastic about the initiatives included in this budget. We are supportive of the district's goals and objectives which will be reinforced with this spending. We believe that this budget is respectful of all taxpayers while balancing the need to continue to invest in our schools and our children.

The proposed budget is only a 2.02% increase over last year's approved budget. We are fully aware of the extreme financial difficulties facing our state and the potential for our town to sustain a significant financial burden. However, we cannot lose sight of the need to protect the asset that keeps our community strong and attractive to incoming residents - Darien's public schools. While our community may have to make some sacrifices, we cannot sacrifice our schools.

For years, CDSP has been covering many of the same themes at these hearings: the need for transparency and accountability, differentiation to meet all learners at their



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level, smoother and more thoughtful transition planning between school levels, and communication to parents. We are very pleased to say that we have seen real progress in some of these areas, and are hopeful that some of the initiatives in this year's budget will bring us even closer to our goals.

Last year, we labeled the theme of the budget as Redefinition. This year, we feel that this budget is finally about Reimagination. How can we use technology to build 21st century skills? How can we propagate academic excellence in our secondary schools? How can we create environments that address the very real social and emotional challenges of our youth?

As we move forward, we still see a lot of work to be done. As the Department Chairs provide the promise for greater consistency and improved transitions between middle school and high school, we would also like to see the district focus on parity in other ways: for example, standards of practice regarding homework from class to class within elementary schools and middle school teams; and faithfulness to curriculum between elementary schools and classrooms.

It is still too early in the process for parents to opine on the proposal for the Alternative High School. However, we recognize Dr. Brenner's unique experience in this area and we are interested to learn more details about the program, including its location and its potential to help Darien students as well as generate revenue for the district.

In regards to the long awaited Facilities Master Plan, we would ask the district to keep in mind not just the pressing needs for maintenance, but the need to provide some level of basic parity among the schools. We want to understand what the requirements are, particularly for our elementary schools: What are the appropriate classroom sizes? How should specials be delivered in the elementary setting? What common areas are required in elementary schools and how large do they need to be? Minimal work will **HAVE** to be done to assure that children in all five elementary schools have a similar, not identical, experience with regards to their physical setting.

We would also ask the Board to consider **HOW** you will convert the Master Plan into an Action Plan within a reasonable amount of time. Your leadership will be required to set goals, establish criteria for decision-making and to set and achieve timelines for moving forward. Parents have patiently waited for the planning process to be completed and now we want to see action.



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Moving ahead parents want to see more data about how the different initiatives are affecting students. For example, we would like to see evidence that the Department Chairs have impacted teacher quality and retention. We would like to know how the restructuring of 300 level classes at DHS has impacted student outcomes. Overall, we want to believe that district decisions are data driven and that meaningful outcomes are defined prior to implementation of new programs. Discipline in decision making and greater transparency will provide the entire community with greater confidence in budget proposals.

We are grateful to all the members of CDSP for their dedication to this process. Tonight, you will be hearing from our members on several topics of importance to our community including: the need for Guidance Counselors and Department Chairs in our schools, the proposed DHS cafeteria project and facilities planning. The Council of Darien School Parents stands here tonight in support of this budget because it represents forward-looking initiatives that we believe will bring excellence to our children at every level. We urge you to make that vision a reality for every single one of our students.



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Good evening -- members of the Board of Education, Dr. Brenner, the Darien Public School Administration and general public, thank you for your time tonight. My name is Peter Orphanos, 67 Raymond Street, and I have a tenth grade daughter at Darien High School. I speak to you tonight on behalf of Darien High School Parents Association in support of the Superintendent's proposed 2017/2018 budget, specifically as it pertains to DHS.

Darien's commitment to excellence in public education is why many of us chose to live here. I submit that the quality of our school system is the bedrock of our community and why we must move forward and strengthen the quality of education at Darien High School and the whole district.

We wish to acknowledge and support Principal Dunn and her team at DHS for their work enhancing and enriching the learning experience within the framework of a responsible and well planned budget. Program growth in areas such as technology and guidance counselors, affirm Darien High School as the flagship high school not only of our town, but I submit, of the State of Connecticut.

There is one particular area of concern -- the challenge to the proposed Darien High School cafeteria expansion. A cafeteria is more than a place to eat. It is where our students gather with their peers and it creates an important sense of community. Principal Dunn has spoken of having the cafeteria evolve into more of a Student Center - a central gathering place for academic collaboration and social community. Darien High School students need this.

I am troubled that we are even having this debate now. This project was approved last year by both the Board of Education and Board of Finance, and was held in abeyance as a good-faith accommodation due to the unpredictable financial situation in Hartford. While Hartford's support for Darien was in question then, the defined need for the cafeteria expansion was not. I could not understand delaying a project when the need for it would knowingly become only more acute, and when it could only become more expensive.

The fact is undisputed that Darien High School needs to expand its cafeteria. The cafeteria issue is not new. It seems to have been forgotten that the school was designed with two cafeterias to meet the enrollment when it opened. Today's cafeteria dysfunction originated with the repurposing of the "second" cafeteria space some years ago. The problem has only become more acute with the surge in enrollment, which itself, is getting worse.

It is time to fix the problem which has been there for years. The need for expansion existed last year. The need exists this year. The need will continue to exist in years to come. Others this evening will set the record straight about the practical reality of the overcrowding. Only with approval of this project as a part of this budget can we reasonably expect to have the project completed prior to the anticipated 2018 enrollment.



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There have been suggestions that expansion is not necessary, and that alternatives have not been explored. The fact that there are some lunch "waves" which are larger than others, does not, in fact, support this assertion. Rebalancing of lunch shifts beyond that which currently exists (which we do not concede is practical) would require that enrollment in certain classes be capped, and that students may not be able to take classes of their choice, or that required curriculum be put off due to class size limitation, all because of lunch scheduling based on the fact that the cafeteria is too small. I ask, rhetorically, does Darien want to tell students that their curricular needs are subordinate to the restrictions of the cafeteria? I think not. This proves our point that maintaining the current cafeteria capacity, by definition, fails to meet the educational needs of Darien High School students. Expansion is the only solution and offers our town solid value as long as it is done right, again, the first time. Now.

In sum, we believe that the targeted investments in the Proposed Budget, most especially the Darien High School cafeteria expansion, will allow Darien to maintain the excellence which it demands from its schools. We caution against illusions of short-term savings that ultimately result in higher costs, wasted taxpayer dollars, and the compromise of long-term goals and objectives.

Thank you.

Ben Hayes

6 Tanglewood Trail

Senior at Darien High School and I always eat lunch in the cafeteria.

We get 28 mins for lunch – this is the only social and relaxation time we get all day – there is no time at all in between classes, and because of my subjects, I get hardly any frees. I value the chance to see my friends and take a breather. I have often not been able to get a seat in the cafeteria, have had to search for a chair elsewhere, and then bring it to where my friends are and eat on my lap.

The only time teachers send us to the wrong lunch wave is when we are sitting a long test. For academic integrity and to keep our train of thought we cannot stop half way through the test, go to lunch and then pick up where we left off. Especially in AP classes, taking longer tests is important preparation for the AP exams and we want to be able to do them un-interrupted. I don't think cafeteria overcrowding should effect our ability to take these long tests.

Hello, my name is Jason Gaaserud. I live at 35 Driftway Lane and I am here to give my perspective on the DHS Cafeteria. The fact of the matter is, the cafeteria is too crowded. Today I went to the cafeteria for lunch, and because there was no room for me to sit, I went somewhere else to eat. Other times, when there is enough room, I have had to stand by tables until a seat opens up. Once I even shared a chair with someone. Unfortunately, these experiences are typical for DHS Students-not the exception.

I think transforming the cafeteria into a student center would be a great way to improve the atmosphere at school. There is no real place at the school that is good for hanging out while one does not have classes, but I think the cafeteria could fulfil this role. DHS students deserve a better cafeteria with enough room for all of us.

6.

Avery Brook
27 Lake Drive
DHS Senior and Community Council President

I eat every day in the cafeteria. For me, 4th lunch seems to be the biggest issue. There is very little seating to be found. This is due to teachers sending their kids to 4th lunch after testing. There is definitely a lack of space at tables and many times I have had to share a seat with a friend. The cafeteria is very noisy and it can be hard to talk to people. I believe that more space is needed to deal with the peak lunch waves and an extension would hopefully help the noise issue and make it easier for everyone to talk to each other.

{ Liz Borecki
62 Fitch Avenue
DHS Senior and Community Council Member

My name is Alex Swift. I live at 177 Leroy Avenue . I am a Junior at DHS.

I am here in support of the proposed expansion of the Darien High School Cafeteria.

Having been at DHS for 2 1/2 years now, I manage to get through the day without having a place to sit at lunch. I know that walking through the school during power hour, there are kids sitting on the floor in different hallways. Looking for a chair, may take up to 5 minutes.

It may not sound like a long time, but it really is a lot when you only have 20 minutes because a teacher has gone over time, or you stayed to ask a few questions about tomorrow's test. Half the student body seems to have to share a chair with one if not 2 people, crowded around a single table.

I have a sister who is a freshman. Of all the heads up I could give her about the high school, it seems that finding a seat at lunch is one that I should not really have to give. I am grateful to be at DHS, and there are so many wonderful things to be proud of. I just think this is something that should not even be a question. As a member of post 53, you hear all the time about the dangers of overcrowding. Simply put, the cafeteria is too small for all of the students in the high school.

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Robert Garrett

68 Stony Brook Road

Senior at Darien High School and I always eat in the cafeteria

I see people eating all over the school – some by choice, some in order to have study groups, some because of lack of seats in the cafeteria. These areas are not set up for eating and can make our school a real mess. I've walked through these areas many times after power hour and seen the mess that is left behind. Some lunch waves are certainly busier than others, and it can be hard to find a spot at a table. I think that the cafeteria should have the space to accommodate everyone.

Hi. My name is Ben Olson. My address is 16 Little Brook Rd. N. I am a freshman at Darien High School

During lunch:

- Students grab chairs and put them around 3-4 tables leaving the other tables without chairs.
- Many students have to sit 2-3 kids per chair making it hard but I imagine even harder if you have few friends to share a chair with.
- We used to sit outside but now, with the cold weather, the chairs are gone so if we can't find a seat in the lunchroom we eat our lunch walking around the halls.

School is stressful enough without adding the stress of not having a seat at lunch.

Thank you.



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Good evening, my name is Ann Dickson and I live at 6 Sunnyside Avenue. I have an 11th grader at DHS and a college freshman who graduated last year. I am speaking tonight on behalf of the parents of Darien High School students. There are two issues of particular concern to us and we hope that by addressing these issues we will create a more equitable and supportive environment for our children.

For years we have been hearing parents complain about inconsistency among classes and a lack of attention to the sometimes problematic transition between 8th grade and 9th grade. We are encouraged that the administration and Board have heard these concerns. We firmly support the recommendation to provide additional curriculum supervision and evaluative support with the creation of the Department Chair position. Our reasons for supporting this change are to provide both a better educational experience for our children and to allay some of the administrative burden which currently falls to the building principals. The parents see real value in subject experts providing support, coaching, and evaluation to teachers in their subject.

Under the current curriculum monitor model, students in different sections of the same course may experience varying consistency of content, testing and marking, and assignment deadlines. We would like to see a model, under which one subject expert would be responsible for overseeing classroom teaching and course content, and would give students the same experiences and opportunities across all sections. The benefits of consistency are many, not the least of which will be insuring that all students receive the same preparation in one grade that will provide for their success as they advance to the next. We see many of our children struggle with the transition from 8th to 9th grade so we would value a system that better integrates the curriculums and requirements of middle and high school.

Similarly, we endorse the addition of a Special Education Department Chairperson working at the secondary level. Much in the same way Curriculum Department Chairs will be supporting teachers, this person would have the ability to make sure that best special education teaching practices are followed when it comes to making accommodations and modifications, so that children with special education needs can access the academic curriculum. In the same way that *all* students should have the same experience across different sections of the same course, students with special education needs should have access to the same high quality instructional practices no matter who their teacher is. There is also a need for a Special Education Department Chairperson to establish a seamless transition process that prepares students who are entering Darien High School and provides them with the skills necessary to access the high school curriculum. We ask that the Administration consider the scope of work that this position entails. We believe that one Special Education Department Chairperson for grades 6 – 12 may not be enough, due to the student caseload, the different environments in middle and high school, and the fact that these individuals will also need to work closely with department chairs and regular education teachers as well.



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In addition, the current budget proposal requests an additional guidance counselor whose time would be evenly divided between Middlesex and the high school. The unique needs of the student population at DHS cannot be met by only a part-time counselor so we strongly believe that an additional full time guidance counselor at the high school is necessary.

The academic demands and social pressures for our students at the high school are great. We entrust our guidance counselors with providing the support our children require to navigate the complexities of the teenage years. One of the roles of the guidance counselor is to be the front line of defense of our children's well being and we believe it is important to invest money into our children's mental health.

Not only are the high school guidance counselors serving in a supportive, problem solving capacity for our children, they are also overseeing the college application process for most. Over the past several years, the college application process has been more complex with the increased number of early decision and early action options along with an increased number of applications overall per student. Each guidance counselor is responsible for writing recommendations for each of their students. With responsibility for more and more students, it becomes more difficult for the guidance counselors to get to know each of these students as individuals.

DHS guidance counselors are also supporting our children with the Advisory program which is in its second year. Students and parents alike have found this program to be instrumental in providing information and developing a tighter relationship between students and counselors. Certainly, our guidance counselors have put considerable time and effort into the development and implementation of the Advisory program.

As parents, we firmly support Department Chairs and a full time guidance counselor at the high school. We hope that these initiatives will address our concerns and deliver the excellent education we want for our children.



Good evening, my name is Theresa Vogt. I live at 22 Circle Road and I am the CDSP Rep for Middlesex. I have two children in our schools: my daughter is a freshman at DHS and my son is a 7th grader at Middlesex. I am here tonight to voice the Middlesex parent community's strong support for the addition of a full-time guidance counselor at Middlesex, as well as the addition of Department Chairs for grades 6-12.

Recognizing that our guidance departments are very much used, yet under-staffed (there are only five guidance counselors at Middlesex, three of whom have over 240 students assigned to them, with one 7th grade counselor having 275 students), the current proposed budget currently asks for one additional guidance counselor to be shared between the high school and middle school. While we appreciate the financial reasons behind only asking for one shared guidance counselor, we believe the best use of our dollars would be to invest in one person for each school.

There is so much more to the role of a Guidance Counselor than helping families navigate the college process. The Guidance Counselors at Middlesex and DHS are the constant in our students' lives as they navigate everyday life; and the lives and challenges of a middle schooler are very different than those of a high schooler.

This is my third year standing up here to advocate for the middle school and in all those years, the administration of Middlesex has asked for additional resources to support the wellbeing of our students. I looked at the first speech I made two years ago and my words then still resonate today: the three years in middle school are the three toughest years for most students, developmentally and emotionally. These are the years when our kids are trying to figure out who they are and where they fit in. Under the best of circumstances, these are difficult years. Some students have learning differences to contend with, some have less than ideal situations at home, and for most, middle school is their first introduction to social media. As for that last one, there may be no group that understands the pitfalls of the social media learning curve on the lives of our kids than the Middlesex administration and Guidance department because whether we like it or not, what our kids experience outside of school still follows them to school.

Our new Principal, Shelley Somers, believes the addition of the counselor is critical to the school. During her first year here, she has already made changes in the work of this department, giving the Guidance Counselors even more of a front-line role with parents and, hopefully, next year rolling out an advisory program modeled after the highly successful program at DHS. These changes will continue to tax an already highly stretched department.

Walk into the Guidance Department at Middlesex and I can assure you that you will find students in the offices of their counselors either seeking advice or a place where they can feel safe while they work through a moment of anxiety. It is a testament to our middle school guidance department that our kids consider them a go-to. That said, no child can time their crisis, nor should we expect them to have to turn to another guidance counselor because they were assigned to one who is shared with DHS. As a parent who has personal experience working closely with the guidance department, I can tell you that there were days when I felt better knowing that my child's guidance counselor was simply in the building. Adding only one counselor to split their time between DHS and Middlesex is not fair to our students or our families.

Our support for Department Chairs is another investment in our students. How many times have we discussed ways to ease the transition from 5th to 6th grade and then from 8th to 9th grade, and yet despite our best efforts, we continue to hear parents complain about 6th grade math and 9th grade reading comprehension and writing skills. Between Middlesex and DHS, 12 teachers coordinate six different academic departments. At Middlesex, those Curriculum Monitors (as they are called there) carry a full course load and have no release time. They are not certified to assess their fellow teachers, so while they all do an excellent job of putting forth a curriculum that meets our high standards and one that should for all intents and purposes flow from one grade to the next with ease, they cannot determine if every teacher is implementing the curriculum equally.

Teacher reviews are conducted by an administration that in addition to not being deeply proficient in all subject areas, must deal with unexpected crises, while overseeing the everyday of their buildings. What falls by the wayside in that? Teacher reviews. As a result, you will hear parents and students complain that there is no parity among the teams. Grading is inconsistent, homework loads different, testing on the same content can happen weeks apart depending on the teacher. You will hear some kids say they were better prepared for the next grade because they were on a tough team or you will hear others boast that they don't get a lot of homework. This all matters. As much as we don't like to admit it, middle school matters as grades in 7th and 8th grade impact placement heading into 9th, and in some cases, 10th grade.

The Department Chair role, as we understand it, will fix these gaps and inconsistencies and in turn make the transition into and out of Middlesex as fluid as we all want and expect it to be.

The Special Education Chairperson will support children with special education needs in a similar way. Many parents feel that there is disparity between their child's education plan and the implementation of that plan. Consistent professional development, coaching and evaluations will provide our teachers with the tools they need to fully implement each student's individual educational plans and ensure that they have access to the curriculum. The Special Education Department Chairperson should also have the ability to enhance the transition process, to both middle school and high school, to ensure that each student's services and accommodations are appropriate to achieve success in each learning environment.

Thank you.



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Curriculum:

Good Evening. My name is Sara Goertel and I live at 22 Brushy Hill Road. I have 3 of my 4 children at Tokeneke school. I'm going to speak this evening about initiatives important to the parents of elementary school students.

The three initiatives I would like to focus on tonight are: Professional Development, Library/Maker Spaces, and transitions from Pre-K to Kindergarten and from 5th to 6th Grade.

Professional Development:

As parents, we believe the most important factor contributing to our children's success is the quality of teaching. We strongly support the continued investment in the professional development of our educators. We want our teachers exposed to evidence-based "best practice" teaching strategies and the most effective methods for reaching all different types of learners in the classroom.

- We agree with the focus of spending this year on science, social studies, gifted education, math and health education, as well as specific training for priority content areas (Orton-Gillingham, Wilson, SRBI training, etc.)
- We would like to encourage the administration, through this professional development and other efforts, to continue to strive for consistency across schools: pacing of curriculum, amount and type of homework, etc.
- At the same time, we expect this professional development to help strengthen practices for differentiation within classrooms/per student.
- Along with investments in professional development, parents would like to see measurement, tracking and reporting on the success of these initiatives.

Let's continue to build our schools as places where both teachers and students learn and grow.

Library/Maker Spaces:

We are excited about the possibility of reimagining our libraries as 21st century maker spaces.

- What is the vision for what these LLCs or maker spaces will eventually become? Do we have models for schools doing this successfully that we are looking to emulate? By beginning with the end in mind, we can better map how to get there together.
- Additionally, we need to have some discussion on how and when the elementary school children will be able use the libraries. We expect our kids are going to be very excited about these new spaces! Will they be able to go before and/or after school? Will there be curriculum to support the spaces? Will the maker spaces support the curriculum?

We look forward to working with you to further define the plans make these spaces a reality.

Transitions:

Parents would like to keep looking for ways to help our children make the transitions from pre-school to Kindergarten and from Elementary School to Middle School more seamless.



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- Key areas of concern in the Pre-K to K transition seem to be: parent expectations regarding communication, planning coordination between ELP and the receiving team, the need to better educate parents about the individual plans for their children, and the general expectations for the new setting.
- Regarding the 5th to 6th Transition, we believe that having consistent practices and expectations across the five schools will help all new 6th graders start on the same path for success.
 - We would like to see — not *more!*— but more *thoughtful* homework assignments, emphasis on time, project management, and study skills, and better preparation for the rigor they'll face at Middlesex.
 - We are excited by new efforts like having the 5th graders attend the Middlesex musical dress rehearsal to start getting the kids in the building sooner.
 - We encourage more ideas like this as it not only makes Middlesex less of a mystery to the kids but also gives them another chance to feel like the young adults they are becoming.

Parents want to know that instructional initiatives are based on research and best practice data; include a comprehensive professional development plan; and provide clear measures of success by which parents can understand the progress of their child. We look forward to more communication on the success of these initiatives.



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Hello. My name is Sara Parent. I live at 227 Hollow Tree Ridge Road and have two children at Holmes School. I would like to speak to you tonight about our elementary school facilities.

Darien is a vibrant community that places a high value on academic excellence and we applaud your efforts to invest in our school facilities. We fully support all of the individual capital projects laid out in the current budget. However, we view these as only a starting point and urge you to look at the bigger picture. We, the parents of Darien public school students, feel the capital conversation needs to have a much larger focus than just what is currently proposed.

Public school buildings are a part of a community's permanent infrastructure—usually lasting for many generations. The school building itself—the place where people and programs converge—can support quality education, or obstruct it. The school facility is much more than a passive location of the educational process. It is, rather, an integral component of the conditions of learning. Substandard school buildings reflect poorly on the people and programs that are housed in them. Conversely, attractive, well maintained, educationally appropriate school facilities support teaching and learning and enhance the community.

The list of parent concerns regarding our school facilities is quite extensive. How many more years to do our children need to spend in what most of us would deem sub-par building facilities, given the high standard we apply to other aspects of our lives and that of our children's lives? What is the minimum standard that we have for our school facilities? How many more years must teachers be in classrooms that are well below appropriate square footage? School facilities affect teacher recruitment, retention, commitment, and effort - all of which directly affects our children.

Additionally, many of our elementary schools have a heating problem. The drastic variation in temperature between classrooms in the same building is shocking. Some basic level of heat control must be a priority. With regards to air conditioning, while we understand that getting central A/C in all of our buildings is not currently possible, it is worthwhile to point out that there are in fact extreme temperature issues within many of the elementary school classrooms in September and August and again in May and June. We strongly believe that this lends itself to a lack of productivity and learning from the students and teachers. If A/C is not possible, certainly window units in every class room must be an option, and we believe that an upgrade to our schools' wiring and power issues needs to be immediately addressed to make this possible.

The portables are an enormous safety concern. To use the bathroom, young children must leave the portable and walk outside, unsupervised, in order to get to the main building. These portables have also far surpassed their life expectancy, and are no longer a conducive learning space. They also pose a vulnerable risk in the event of a lock down, given their location. The learning experience in portables is compromised by poor lighting, erratic temperatures and/or



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noisy heating and air conditioning. Our portables were meant to be temporary yet they are still used as if they were part of the brick and mortar building.

It has also become clear through these capital discussions, that there is not parity amongst our schools as it relates to facilities. This will be further exacerbated with the proposed rebuild of Ox Ridge School. Soon, Darien will have two elementary schools with heating and cooling, an updated look and feel, best practice room sizes, along with many other aspects of a new building. The three old buildings wouldn't even come close to the standard of the other two. While we know these three other schools do not need a complete rebuild, we want to be sure that the look and feel of all the elementary schools will be on par with each other.

Parity should also consider what functional spaces exist in each building. For example, specials teachers - such as foreign language, art and music - should have their own dedicated classrooms at all of our schools, each and every year. The new Ox Ridge will be built with a more technology-driven library/makerspace. It will be critical for the remaining schools to be brought up to the same standard.

With the proposal of multiple new building developments in our town, we have to be prepared for enrollment to rise. Given the uncertainty we encourage the board to think ahead and plan for what may be coming rather than building only what we need right now. We must avoid the mistakes of recent projects where we found ourselves overcapacity within a year of opening the high school and Tokeneke. Furthermore, the common rooms/cafeterias in our elementary schools which are used for school assemblies are small and, in some cases, not even large enough to accommodate the current student population.

Also, at present, the ELP program has eight classes spread out over three elementary schools, which is inefficient for educational cohesiveness and wasteful from a cost perspective. Having a dedicated space to house the entire ELP program, would alleviate these concerns.

We are aware that architects have drafted drawings to start this process, however, we would like to see a more definitive plan and timeline for the overall project. Five more years of small capital fixes ignores the greater issue of existing space constraints and poor facilities conditions and is unacceptable. We would like a plan from the Board that addresses many of the issues outlined here. While improving facilities comes at a financial cost, we believe the benefits of such an investment will surpass the initial fiscal burden. When the positive impacts of facility improvements are felt by the teachers and students, the rewards far outweigh the cost. It would also be prudent to take advantage of low interest rates as rates will likely rise over the next few years. Whatever the future holds for education, our buildings need to adapt to meet these demands. We have a vision of new and improved schools, looking beyond what currently is, to imagine what could —and should —be.

February 2, 2017

Members of the RTM and Board of Education -

My name is Bridget Bepler. I live at 19 Lake Drive and have three children in the Darien schools, two attend Holmes now and all three will be there next year. I am here tonight speaking on behalf of the parents of Holmes School.

While we realize that tonight's discussion is mainly about next year's budget, we would like to look forward and ask you to be proactive in your facilities planning as you continue with discussions about the master plan later this spring and next year.

We are aware that Holmes is projected to have an added section for next year. There is currently nowhere in the building to house this additional section, and there are no funds in this year's proposed budget to solve this problem. This leaves the administration to consider less than satisfactory alternatives as next year looms. A creative, "Band-Aid" solution will have to be created for next year, most likely at the expense of some aspect of our children's education. We certainly applaud you for beginning these important discussions about the future of our schools, but we ask you to widen your lens as the master plan is finalized, and to work to ensure that situations such as this do not happen again at Holmes, or at any school in Darien.

We would like to see a dedicated classroom for each special subject as well as classrooms with proper square footage for optimal instruction in each elementary school in town. Currently, Holmes does not have a classroom for each of its specials subjects. IDEA is currently housed in a small room that can hold 12 students and should be in a larger space. The resource rooms used for more individualized instruction are literally small, converted closets. Building on four classrooms to Holmes would provide the ability to remove the portables, and have an appropriate number of classrooms for the needs of our students. We are excited about the possibilities that exist in the master plan and look forward to more discussion about how to best improve Darien's schools.

I thank you for your attention and time.

BOE Budget Speech-February 2, 2017

Good evening we are Courtney Darby and Tricia Bresnahan, co-chairs of the Special Education Parent Advisory Committee, SEPAC, and Kelly Dupont, Linda Straubel and Wendy Hopper, SEPAC representatives.

We would like to thank Shirley Klein, Scott McCarthy and Dr. Brenner and other school administrators for working collaboratively with our committee to hear the concerns of all Darien parents – and to help all students learn effectively.

We would also like to thank the many educators and administrators who work tirelessly and effectively to help our students achieve their potential.

We are relaying the concerns and input we have received from many parents in the district.

In order to get a true sense of challenges kids face but protect student privacy, we will start with three composite students who share similarities with many students in our district but are not one student in particular.

Meet Jack

Jack is 9 years old and in 4th grade. He is reading at a 2nd grade level and making minimal progress. His classmates ask him why he is reading books that they read when they were “little.”

Meet Sarah

Sarah is 11 years old and in 6th grade. She has been behind her peers academically for years. Sarah was not identified with a learning disability until the end of 3rd grade – and because she could not catch up she had to leave all of her friends after 5th grade to attend a new school. Sarah would rather attend school in her own town and be with her friends. She worries constantly if she will ever be able to come back.

Meet Andrew

Andrew is 15 years old and in 10th grade. He has a hard time talking to peers and teachers. Andrew struggles with the vast amount of content he is expected to learn. He has been told that he is responsible for scheduling tests in alternate settings or talking to his teachers about his IEP modifications and accommodations. Some teachers seem to understand that he learns differently, but some make him consistently ask for notes and study guides for every test and assignment. Many times he gets these study guides late, which makes him even more anxious and leaves him with less time to study or accomplish

assignments.

Tonight we are here to show support for four main areas in the budget. At the same time we are asking for greater transparency and detail in these budget areas.

(1) Professional Development

We'd like to express our support for Clearly Spelled Out Professional Development in Reading, Writing, Assistive Technology and Co-Teaching

Reading

High rates of outplacement for reading disabilities and students who are still struggling in late elementary school indicate that it is important to gain a better understanding of reading resources – in particular Orton Gillingham and Wilson training.

Parents need answers to the following questions: At each school -- How many special education teachers – and general education teachers -- have been trained in OG? How many have been trained in Wilson? How long does a child try one program before moving to another? How many students are using each approach? And what is the data on how successful these reading programs have been in helping students progress and close the gap?

We need to invest in highly effective specialized reading instruction or else we will continue to pay significant dollars in outplacement.

Writing

Writing is a multifaceted task that requires the coordination of many skills and cognitive processes. Due to this complex process – many students, including those with learning disabilities, find writing challenging. The current reader's and writer's workshop model does not provide the specialized instruction needed. These students require explicit, evidence-based instruction in writing. We urge the district to invest in professional development on research-based writing programs.

Assistive Technology

At a recent SEPAC meeting, Lori Ritvo and Christina Stauble, district Assistive Technology Coordinators and Special Education Speech and Language Pathologists, presented to a large crowd of parents an array of assistive technology tools that could help students better access the curriculum. Parents

were excited to learn about these AT features to help struggling students, however they were also frustrated that many teachers are not aware or well-trained in these tools – and that students are also not given adequate training or time to learn the tools. We are excited about the roll out of the 1 to 1 devices, but hope that all students will be trained to use these devices to the best of their ability. Currently expertise resides in pockets throughout the district and the manpower and time for training are lacking. We ask the district to devote sufficient professional development and manpower to assistive technology.

Co-taught classes

We support and are excited about the professional development being given by Marilyn Friend in the co-taught teaching model at the high school this year. We were encouraged to hear she will work with the middle school next year. We urge you to include the elementary level at the same time. The access to co-teaching at the elementary school is uneven, and many students could potentially benefit from this model. It also makes sense to adequately train teachers before assessing the model's effectiveness.

(2) Support for 2 Guidance Counselors (MMS & DHS)

We would like to express our support for two new guidance counselors – one at Middlesex Middle School and one at Darien High School. School guidance counselors are often the first line of defense when it comes to mental health issues.

Just two weeks ago, more than 130 parents attended a presentation by the Child Mind Institute to learn how to better address student anxiety and worries. Research shows that anxiety disorders affect one in eight children and that untreated students are at higher risk of performing poorly in school, missing out on important social experiences, and engaging in substance abuse.

An adequate number of guidance professionals at the middle and high school levels would provide an important safety net for this vulnerable population. We can't defer this need to a part-time schedule.

In addition, when searching for a new high school guidance counselor, we urge the district to consider a professional who also has expertise in secondary transition, which is required for all students with IEPs after the age of 15.

(3) Support for full-time psychologist at DHS

We support the budget request for an additional .5 psychologist at DHS. The

position plays a critical role in addressing a range of mental health issues in high school students. In addition, this full-time position is needed to provide careful evaluation and testing expertise.

(4) Support for 2 Special Education Department Chairs (MMS & DHS)

We'd like to express our support for two (not just one as proposed) school-based Special Education Department Chairs for MMS & DHS.

The budget book explains that the main role of the 6 Department Chairs is "to ensure a consistent vertical curriculum" "across all curriculum areas." The problem with the special education chair is that there is not a "consistent vertical curriculum" grades 6-12. The role is really about overseeing appropriate access to the curriculum.

If we take a moment to consider the role of the Department Chair for Science--grades 6-12 --we are asking this person to be an expert and supervisor in an expansive range of topics—from parts of the body, to meiosis & mitosis, to the thermodynamic cycle. This involves hundreds of pages of curriculum oversight & supervision --it is not a small task.

So keep in mind, we are asking the special education department chair to provide access to this same expansive curriculum. Simultaneously, they need to provide careful oversight in accessing the curriculum in English, Math, Social Studies, Foreign Language, and if necessary, electives.

If anyone has ever tried to help a child with Biology or Algebra II homework after not seeing the course material for many years---you understand that you can't just jump in and supervise. To help a student you must first understand the subject material.

We need school-based Special Education Department Chairs at DHS and MMS. A Department Chair is not going to be effective at training, articulation and supervision unless they are well versed in ensuring appropriate access to the curriculum at each grade level and in each subject.

Alternative School

We agree with the need to address the mental health needs of all of Darien's students. We look forward to hearing more about the plan for the alternative school. We also hope that the needs of our current high school and the space needs of all of our schools are our top priority.

ELP

The Early Learning Program's integrated pre-school program is highly successful and a positive first experience of school for both children with disabilities and without. We support the raise in tuition. In addition, we feel this program needs careful attention. Three locations are difficult at best and the search for a solution needs to be given a higher priority.

Hi. My name is Wendy Hopper and I am speaking to you as a parent of (*3 Darien students, one of whom is dyslexic*). I became a member of SEPAC to help educate myself on what our district offers the dyslexic population, as well as to advocate for more robust early intervention for students with reading difficulties.

My understanding is that Darien has one of the highest populations attending Windward, in addition to the number of students who go to Eagle Hill and other schools, or leave school to receive intensive tutoring at Lindamood-Bell.

Most parents I speak with want to keep their child in their neighborhood school with their siblings, friends and time for afterschool activities. So why do they leave? Often they leave because the school cannot meet their child's needs OR because their child's learning difference was caught too late and they needed more intervention.

Financially, this places a large burden on families, as well as the district through outplacement and litigation.

We are a district with many talented, experienced and well-educated teachers and administrators, and I have seen many administrative improvements, including the addition of SESS facilitators in our buildings and the implementation of Foundations in the early grades.

But I want to share with you that if you are the parent of a child with a learning difference, you need to work twice as hard to make sure that your child is receiving the services they need to be successful and to start closing the gap.

I am concerned that what we currently provide in data collection and Progress Monitoring, Early Intervention using Orton-Gillingham based reading instruction and Teacher Training, is still not enough.

I often hear parents say that their classroom teacher does not notice anything or thinks that their child is making enough progress, only to find out several years later that their child has fallen behind. I don't think that teachers are neglectful; most are well-meaning, so I think it comes from a genuine feeling of wanting the child to be successful. So how can our district support teachers in identifying "at risk" students and providing appropriate early intervention and communication with parents?

I also hear parents say that teachers don't really understand dyslexia, and to be fair, it is complicated and challenging to understand. I am in full support of the district's training in Orton-Gillingham based reading instruction for all special education and general education classroom teachers, as it will provide an understanding of reading differences and give

teachers tools to offer students during reading and writing lessons.

Finally, data collection and Progress Monitoring. What does the district have in place to monitor student's progress that is consistent across the district, informs instruction and helps parents understand where their child is compared to their grade-level peers?

My hope is that the district can create a system where struggling readers are identified early, are given appropriate intervention, that data is collected to inform instruction and a child's progress is monitored closely to ensure that the gap is closing.

In the ideal situation, a parent does not need to ask for these things and teachers do not need to reinvent the wheel.

Thank you for your time and your efforts toward improving Special Education services for struggling readers in Darien. I understand that change is a process and I thank you for the positive changes that are in place and look forward to seeing where we can go.

Vasil, Nadine

From: Harman, Michael A.
Sent: Thursday, February 02, 2017 10:24 PM
To: Vasil, Nadine
Subject: Fwd: For the record

John Sini's comments

Typos courtesy of my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: P&Z Gmail <sini.darienz@gmail.com>
Date: February 2, 2017 at 9:15:20 PM EST
To: mharman@darienps.org
Subject: For the record

John Sini comments:

I'd like to Make a few points:

First as Chairman of P&Z:

If cafeteria is ultimately deemed in the best interest of our community, it's likely that our commission would like to see the construction done in conjunction with the turf and track replacement project because it would be least disruptive to the surrounding area.

As I've said to a few of you before, our commission will ensure that any application that is in the greater public interest will be prioritized. For example, we approved the Ox Ridge Hunt Club subdivision in one week's time and could ensure a similar timeline for the district with this project.

My message to you as a taxpayer and parent of three boys -- two boys which are educated in the district -- and one that attends Windward -- is the following.

(While we chose to send our youngest to Windward, I have nothing but good things about the district's Special Education efforts)

While I think a new cafeteria and an Alternative school is probably necessary, I'd love to see the BOE spend additional some time convincing the ultimate arbiters of the Town budget - our RTM members and their constituents -- that this is the right capital project and the right education program at the right time.

Lastly, I'd just like to remind everyone the dismal conditions Connecticut's fiscal state is in. Connecticut is number #47 in the nation and there are no signs things will get any better under the current leadership in Hartford, in fact it's only going to get worse for "Gold Coast" town's like Darien.

My general plea is "Please, please think long and hard before you add additional costs to the district's capital and operating budgets."

I spent 18 years in a Long Island public school system without air conditioning and survived -- I am sure my boys can survive without it.

Thanks for your time this evening.

John Sini, Jr.
Commissioner, Planning & Zoning
203.969.4133

Curriculum and Instruction

Further develop and ensure consistency of the implementation of SRBI, K-12 and measure its effectiveness: *Reported to the Board of Education, October 18, 2016*

- Implement and provide professional development to staff in the use of digital database/warehouse for the purposes of tracking performance across a student's K-12 experience
 - *RTI studio is now the primary resource for data review and data collection for SRBI (K-8)-Access only for Grades 9-12 at this time*
 - *OnGoing Staff Development Provided- Tiered Roll-Out*
 - *SRBI Teams have reviewed all benchmark data (fall 1/fall2/winter) and identified students who require support through SRBI Tier 1, 2, or 3*
 - *Ongoing data is collected and reviewed*
- Implement and provide professional development on a universal screener (fall, winter, spring) K-8
 - *Universal Screener - AimswebPlus has been implemented, K-8 (Fall, Winter to date)*
 - *Assessment Team Created and Implemented*
 - *On-going Staff Development at district-wide PD sessions*
- Create an SRBI parent handbook to be available via the DPS website
 - *Parent Workshops Held*
 - *SRBI Handbook Available on website*
- Maintain and support a literacy & math team (K-8): programs, instructional strategies and assessments
 - *District-Wide Assessment Team has been established and has reviewed all student benchmark data*
 - *Clear Benchmark windows have been created, K-8*
 - *Math and Literacy Teams now include grades 6-8. Both teams have common/consistent goals - meet regularly to ensure consistency (school to school and level to level)*
 - *Criteria for support has been identified, K-8*
 - *On-Going Staff-Development/Teacher Resources added to "Staff Resource" website*
- Ensure consistency among schools with SRBI protocols and criteria
 - *Systems/Protocols/Structures have been established for all staff and have been reviewed with all staff*
 - *Systematic review of meetings*
 - *SRBI dates for each school*
 - *Structure for support has been established at DHS*

Provide professional development for teachers, K-12 in the Next Generation Science Standards and new Social Studies C3 framework: *Board of Education Curriculum Update 3/14/17 (Science) and 3/28/17 (Social Studies)*

- Continue the K-12 Science Professional Learning Community after-school sessions
 - *2016-2017, K-12 PLC's*
 - *Staff development provided*
- Using a Trainer of Teachers (TOT) model, build capacity of our teachers K-12 on the Next Generation Science Standards and new Social Studies C3 framework
 - *Teacher Leaders selected from training sessions providing ongoing professional development (K-12)*
- Provide professional development in the inquiry model- and support its implementation
 - *K-12 Model created with Teacher Leaders*
 - *Staff development provided by grade-level and in collaboration with all levels*

Create new curriculum maps (long-range) plan for implementation of new units of study/revisions of courses to reflect new standards/frameworks:

- In collaboration with the curriculum directors/monitors/coordinators, create long-range plans to support the implementation of new science/social studies units
 - *Long-range draft maps created*
- Create and implement "pilot" units of study in science/social studies: collect feedback and respond

- *Draft units created and being implemented, feedback to be collected*
- Study ways in which to integrate units across content areas- and skills
 - *Cross-team collaboration*
- Further develop a structure to write, revise and review curriculum
 - *Curriculum Development structure created*

Explore the administrative structure in the secondary schools, particularly as it applies to individual departments to ensure accountability of curriculum and instruction initiatives:

- Research other districts within DRG A
 - *Study of district models with DRG A*
- Review/study best practices to support implementation of curriculum in particular at the secondary level
 - *Presented to the Board of Education January/February 2017*
- Create structures/protocols to ensure alignment
 - *Job Descriptions created for department chairpersons*
 - *2015-2017, a systematic model for curriculum review, alignment*
 - *Collaborative meetings and professional development*
 - *Secondary curriculum leaders collaborative PD and creation of units of study*

Review Darien Public Schools current social skills curriculum/approaches and make recommendation for grades K-8. (In Process- and will continue in 2017-2018, with health/wellness review)

- Study various social skills programs/approaches and plan for implementation K-5 Research the implications/transition of an elementary approach on grades 6-8
 - *Current- research review*
 - *Exploratory staff development*
- Develop a plan to integrate the approach/program into a systematic curriculum
 - *Ongoing: to develop in conjunction with Health/Wellness curriculum*
 - *Ongoing: to align with current curriculum work*
- Create an SRBI (Behavior) model K-8, with corresponding structures and protocols
 - *OnGoing: Goals/Objectives are in the process of being developed*
 - *OnGoing: Tiered Model to be created*

Investigate primary resources for K-5 mathematics, implications for 6-8 mathematics and make recommendations for the 2017-2018 school year: *Board of Education Curriculum Update 3/14/17*

- In collaboration with classroom teachers and the math team, review primary mathematics resources
 - *Math Research Team K-8*
- Research resources used by other districts in our District Reference Group
 - *Data and Study is in process- within DRG and with various publishers*
 - *Cross -walk of CCSS, curriculum and primary resources has been completed*
- Review possible implications on 6-8 mathematics program/curriculum
 - *Cross-level committee on Math Research Team- reviewing resources and possible implications for school year 2020*

Provide systematic professional development K-12 in differentiation, in particular in mathematics:

- Utilizing one presenter, provide professional development in Differentiated Instruction
 - *Staff developer has provided common content PD K-12 (Nanci Smith)*
- Professional development will include in-class sessions/coaching (“i do, we do, you do”)
 - *Group and individual coaching*
 - *Lesson study through PLC’s*
 - *Collaborative work with SRBI staff*
- Support school administrators in the supervision and evaluation of “differentiating techniques”
 - *Learning Rounds*
 - *Case Studies*
 - *Content Professional Development*

Assess the “Restructure of Support Pilot” for Darien High School and make recommendations for growth: *Board of Education Update 3/28/17*

- Collect data on student performance by reviewing students grades who are in the various levels
 - *In process*
- Provide administrative oversight to ensure responsiveness to needs of students/teachers

- *Collaborative efforts between administrators and teachers*
- Provide opportunities for planning and professional development for staff
 - *Teachers participated in professional development provided by the State Education Resource Center (SERC)*
 - *Common professional development and meeting time*
 - *Differentiation with Nanci Smith (ASCD)*
- Conduct surveys and focus groups to assess value add of team-taught and lab classes at Darien High School
 - *In process*

Create a digital standards-based Progress Report for the elementary level to be implemented in 2016-2017 school year. Review and revise the progress report as needed (short-term and long-term changes):

- Provide support to teachers on how to mark progress for students digitally
 - *Digital Progress Reports at the elementary level have been implemented*
 - *Professional development provided*
 - *Calibration rubrics/anchors*
- Communicate with families to ensure access
 - *School Messenger sessions offered to parents*
- Revise immediate needs on the digital progress report
 - *Revisions made to various content areas*
 - *2017-2018 additional areas to be revised- SEL rubric*
- Reconvene Progress Report committee to review and revise elementary progress report to ensure clarity and alignment
 - *In process and on-going. This committee will continue to meet in 2017.*

Review the primary resources/assessments in the world language program & make recommendations/implement as appropriate: *Board of Education Curriculum Update 2/28/17 *

- Based on spring assessment pilot (AAPPL/SOPA), meet and discuss resources/teaching strategies
- Discuss possible curriculum impact changes

Review the impact of the World Language Program at MMS (5 days versus 3 days):

- Schedule consistent feedback meetings with the World Language department
- Revise new units of study developed summer 2016/fall 2016
- Meet with department chairs/monitors to support alignment

Special Education

Design an Alternative Education Program for general and special education students in grades 9-12.

- Reconvene AEP Steering Committee to review and analyze elements of effective alternative programs and collaboratively develop a project plan
 - *AEP Steering Committee presented to the Board of Education*
- Identify the cohort of participating students for the 2017-2018 school year
 - *In progress*
- Identify personnel and resources for program implementation in the 2017-2018 school year
 - *Proposed 2 FTEs to be redeployed from Darien High School*
- Collaborate with architects on classroom and student space allocation and design
 - *Darien Public Library is the proposed location*

Continue professional development in IEP writing, best practices in instructional strategies and methodologies, data collection, and progress monitoring.

- Provide technical support for IEP Direct users to improve the quality and usability of data reporting
 - *Special education secretaries in all buildings participated in training provided directly by IEP Direct.*
 - *Special education teachers participated in professional learning opportunities focused on effective PPT facilitation and documentation and developing S.M.A.R.T. IEP goals.*

- Conduct workshops and trainings for special education teachers and service providers in understanding learning standards and instructional methodologies used for all students. Use IEP Direct sample goals to set expectations regarding level of detail, progress/mastery metrics, and alignment to learning standards
 - *Cooperative Educational Services (CES) provided professional development to ELP teachers and related service providers on “Building Meaningful Curriculum Using the Cycle of Intentional Teaching.”*
 - *In addition to IEP Direct sample goals, special education teachers participated in PD on developing S.M.A.R.T. IEP goals.*
 - *“How to go from Reading IEPs to Planning Modifications” at Teachers College for SESS Facilitator*
 - *PPT Chairperson training at SERC for SESS Facilitator*
 - *“Special Education/504 Bootcamp for Administrators” for SESS Facilitator*
- Conduct workshops and trainings for teachers and service providers in utilizing research and evidence to make IEP service recommendations
 - *George McCloskey presented a workshop on “Improving Executive Functions: Strategies to Change the Brain and Change Behavior” for SET and psychologists*
 - *Lois Kam Heymann presented a workshop on “Diagnosing and Treating Auditory Challenges and APD in School-Age Children” for SLP and psychologists*
 - *Christine Russo-Mayer presented on “Auditory Processing Disorders in the Classroom” for SLP and psychologists*
 - *Central Office special education administrators presented on “The Child-Centered IEP/PPT Process” for SET*
 - *PROMPT therapy training for Speech and Language Pathologists (SLP)*
 - *“The Zones of Regulation” for SLP and psychologists*
 - *Michelle Garcia Winner’s “Strategies for Concrete Learners” for SLP*
 - *“Beckman Oral Motor Assessment & Intervention” for SLP*
 - *“Transition from School to Adulthood for Students” for SET*
 - *CSDE Secondary Transition presentation for Central Office administrator*
 - *Don Johnston AT Summit for SLP*
 - *PODD Communication training for SLP, SET, and GET*
 - *School Refusal Behaviors for Social Worker*
 - *Neurodevelopmental Model of Comprehensive Assessment for ELP psychologist at ConnCASE*
- Design and train staff on systems for data collection and progress monitoring. Build capacity in utilizing data elements to effectively report student functioning and progress to PPT stakeholders
 - *Catalyst*
 - *Autism Curriculum Encyclopedia (ACE)*
- Provide models of high quality IEP progress reports using objective and measurable evidence
 - *Training SESS Facilitators: developing and sharing exemplars and tools*

Continue professional development in multi-sensory reading programs and math programs Pre-K- 12.

- Continue training for special education teachers in multisensory reading programs (e.g., Orton-Gillingham) in alignment with Curriculum & Instruction initiatives
 - *Orton-Gillingham training provided by Andrea Greer for SET*
 - *The Wilson Reading System Introductory Workshop provided by the State Education Resource Center (SERC) for SET*
 - *The Roots of Literacy for Early Learning Program (ELP) SET*
 - *Learning and the Brain: Reading and Struggling Readers for SET*
 - *Visualizing and Verbalizing for SET*
- Continue training for special education teachers in multisensory math programs in alignment with Curriculum & Instruction initiatives
 - *Special education teachers participated in PD on TouchMath*
 - *Meaningful Math: Effective Multisensory Strategies for Teaching Math*

Provide professional development in best practices in co-teaching K-12.

- Goal setting meeting with Marilyn Friend during summer 2016
 - *Developed a timeline for professional development for 2016-17 school year*
 - *“Co-Teach 2.0: Continuing the Conversation” held during the winter of 2016-17*
 - *Co-Teaching: Six Approaches” provided by the State Education Resource Center (SERC)*
 - *“Making a Difference Through Co-Teaching” by SERC*
- Inaugural meeting with Marilyn Friend and DPS leadership to be held in the spring of 2017, followed by site visits and observation of co-taught classes in elementary, middle, and high school, and review of baseline data.
 - *Marilyn Friend in district to conduct site visits and classroom observations at DHS in May 2017*
- Establish timeline with Marilyn Friend to design and present a series of workshops on co-teaching in spring/summer 2017.
 - *Co-Teaching Summer Bootcamp 101 for SET in August 2017 and Fall 2017*

Provide professional development and curriculum design for highly structured, systematic behavioral intervention programs.

- Provide intensive training for staff on Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)-based strategies for academic instruction and behavior intervention
 - *Professional development on foundations in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and calibration on features of ASD*
 - *PMT apprenticeship training for behavior analysts*
 - *Special education teachers, behavior analysts, physical therapist participated in PD on the New England Center for Children’s (NECC) Autism Curriculum Encyclopedia (ACE), including how to collect and interpret data*
 - *Special education teachers, behavior analysts, physical therapist participated in PD presented by the NECC on systems and tools for addressing challenging behaviors in children with ASD*
 - *Continue collaboration with BCBA agencies/consultants on student- and program-specific strategies and methodologies*

Continue systematic ongoing communication mechanisms with the PTOs, SEPAC, and CDSP.

- Develop a calendar of workshops responsive to families’ inquiries and needs on relevant topics in special education (e.g., PPT process and evaluations and clinical disorders in school-aged children).
 - *Presented a Special Education Overview at the beginning of the 2016-17 school year*
 - *Assistive Technology (AT) Supports for Students with IEPs presented by DPS staff*
 - *Preparing Special Education/504 Students for Transition to Darien High School*
 - *The Evaluation Process: An Understanding of Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Evaluations (to be presented this year)*
 - *Middlesex Middle School Special Education Overview for Incoming 6th Grade Parents (to be presented this year)*
 - *Colleges with Support Services (to be presented this year)*
- Coordinate efforts with CDSP, PTO and SEPAC to disseminate timely and relevant information to families about special education timelines and initiatives.
 - *Ongoing meetings with CDSP and SEPAC*
 - *Finding the Right College for Students with Learning Differences presented by Dr. Michelle Berg*
 - *Anxiety and Mood Disorders presented by The Child Mind Institute*

Continue to provide professional development for paraprofessionals, Pre-K through 12.

- Workshops to be developed during the 2016-2017 school year.
 - *F.A.T City - Understanding Learning Disabilities workshop*
 - *“Sensory Strategies for Children” provided by Constellation*
 - *PMT training*
 - *Advanced Instructional Strategies for paraprofessionals PK-12 provided by Capital Region Educational Council (CREC)*
 - *COMPASS training for paraeducators by CREC*

Continue the development and implementation of a continuum of special education services to address the needs of special education students Pre-K- 12.

- Collect and analyze student data to identify and develop programs and services to address students’ needs.
 - *Through the PPT and annual review process, data is collected to develop programs aligned to*

students' needs

Continue to review and plan for transitional programs for students 18-21.

- Continue exploration and collaboration with neighboring districts for development of transitional program for SY 17-18.
 - *Contracted with transitional programs for staff training and student services*

Assess the “Restructure of Support Pilot” for Darien High School and make recommendations for growth.*Board of Education Update 3/28/17*

- Collect data on student performance by reviewing students grades who are in the various levels
 - *In process*
- Provide administrative oversight to ensure responsiveness to needs of students/teachers
 - *Collaborative efforts between administrators and teachers*
- Provide opportunities for planning and professional development for staff
 - *Teachers participated in professional development provided by the State Education Resource Center (SERC)*
 - *Common professional development and meeting time*
 - *Differentiation with Nanci Smith (ASCD)*
- Conduct surveys and focus groups to assess value add of team-taught and lab classes at Darien High School
 - *In process*

Business

Establish a comprehensive transportation communication plan for the start of each school year.

- Roll grade levels into Aspen first week in July.
 - *Established a process a rolling grade level from Aspen into Versa Tran. This will ensure the timely testing and publication of routes.*
- Create a synchronization of data into transportation software (versa tran).
 - *Successfully worked with IT to establish a schedule for the synchronization of data.*
- Perform ‘dry run’ of routes with staff
 - *Established a process for the Business Office to perform ‘dry runs’ with the transportation vendor prior to the publication of routes.*
- Publish communication of routes in newspaper, aspen and school messenger.
 - *Bus assignments were posted in the newspapers and aspen. School messenger was used as a notification of such postings.*
- Pilot an online GPS tracking system of routes for parents through an app.
 - *Ongoing. We have been testing an app “First View” that is a product from First Student. This will synchronize all busing routes/stops. It will provide individual notification as to the location of the bus and estimated arrival times. Administrative access / pilot is scheduled to occur in April.*

Implement revised student activity policy/procedure. Standardize templates across the District.

- Present to Policy Committee and Board of Education in August.
 - *Student Activity Policy was adopted by the Board of Education and was rolled out to staff.*
- Present to Administrators and Staff at beginning of school year.
 - *Ongoing. We continue to communicate the changes of the policy to staff.*
- Meet w/ individual school staff on expectations
 - *Met with school staff on the revisions to the policy. Ongoing communication of the policy as the end of the fiscal year is approaching.*

Digitize all Munis financial documents (checks, invoices, purchase orders, 1099's) for electronic storage and retrieval.

- Upgrade financial management system to newer platform (October).
 - *The upgrade to the Munis Financial System was successfully performed with minimal disruptions. We went from version 9.4 to 11.2. The upgrade was for both the Town and BOE as we share our financial management software.*
- Commence implementation process for electronic document storage / retrieval (October through February).

- *Ongoing. The upgrade of Munis Financial System from version 9.4 to 11.2 delayed the implementation of the electronic document storage implementation. Estimated revised timeline is summer/start of the 2017-18 school year.*
 - Train staff
 - Go live (March/April)
-

Human Resources

Oversee and/or coordinate negotiations for seven bargaining units

- Teacher and Administrator negotiations timeline starts to run on August 9, 2016
 - *Completed, subject to RTM vote.*
- Custodians and Cafeteria Worker negotiations are ongoing
 - *Completed.*
- Paraprofessionals, Nurses and Secretaries all have contracts that expire on June 30, 2017; negotiations will begin in the spring
 - *Demand to bargain has been received. Negotiations will be ongoing during the spring.*

Investigate and begin the implementation of digitized onboarding of new hires and absence approvals

- Input all required onboarding forms to Applitrack
 - *In process. Will be complete prior to spring hiring season. All forms required for new hires will be sent electronically to applicants to be completed and stored online.*
- Confirm ability and desirability of Applitrack exporting information to Aesop and/or Munis
 - *Ongoing discussions with Business Office. Systems may not be completely compatible.*
- Set up approval pathways in Aesop for electronic approval of vacation, personal and professional development days
 - *Pathways are set and online approvals will be implemented effective July 1, 2017. Approvals for all types of leave, including professional development, will be requested, approved and stored online.*
- Pilot the online approval process with 12 month employees in August
 - *Pilot will begin in July.*

Update and revise the district's employee handbook

- Review previous District handbook and revise to reflect new legal requirements
- Compare to model employee handbook from the Society of Human Resources Management
 - *Formatting and proofreading in process. Revised Handbook will be posted on the District website shortly.*

Continue to update and monitor all hiring processes

- Continue to receive and evaluate input from administrators on suggested changes to the hiring process
 - *Ongoing. Revision of reference check and requisition forms. Revised certification check procedures to insure appropriate certification.*
- Work with administrators so they are better able to identify outstanding candidates through the application screening process
 - *Provided training on best practices in application and applicant screening. HR office has increased support to administrators in screening of applications. Maintain library of best practice interview questions.*
- Increase outreach to area teacher preparation programs
 - *Increased presence at recruitment fairs including Manhattanville, Teachers' College, UCONN and Fairfield. Increased presence on and use of OLAS (New York State online application System).*
- Work with Katie Stein and Dr. Brenner to prioritize identified policies to bring to the Board for approval
 - *Ongoing review and discussion with district administrators and Shipman & Goodwin on priorities.*
- Analyze and edit Shipman and Goodwin model policies prior to submission to the Board
 - *Ongoing*
- Identify additional policies needed to address specific District needs
 - *Ongoing. Additional policies will be brought to the Board of Education for approval this spring.*

Explore the administrative structure in the secondary schools, particularly as it applies to the impact on staffing

and the duty to negotiate

- Analyze the effect on staffing of potential givebacks from negotiations as well as the elimination of release time for department coordinators
Staffing and financial implications complete. If the positions are implemented, we will need to monitor the Potential RIF'ing and transfer of staff.
- Analyze the effect of any reorganization on the appropriate collective bargaining agreements
Discussions with both DEA and DAA are complete. MOU with the DAA will be signed if positions are implemented.
- Create job descriptions for any new positions
Special Education positions completed. Template for content area positions is done.

Community

Work on communication between parents and the district, including utilizing meetings and digital media

- Meet monthly with CDSP leadership
 - *This practice has been continued since we began in Darien. It often included both the Superintendent and Asst. Superintendent for C & I.*
- Meet new building PTO chairs
 - *This practice has also continued.*
- Implement early dismissal manager for emergency dismissals
 - *Early Dismissal Manager was rolled out approximately one month ago. It provides the schools with far better tracking of our students absences and dismissal procedures.*
- Create consistent communication model for teachers and parents
 - *Our 1:1 model is emphasizing a uniformity communication as it applies to google sites and google classroom. We continue to grow this model with our school community. Weekly newsletters have become a staple at most of our elementary schools. Friday Facts is a regular communication that comes home from MMS.*

Collaborate with Town on opportunities for shared services

- Explore ways to share services on health insurance
 - *We have participated in multiple conversations with the Town around this issue. At this point it is unlikely we will combine because of our favorable position with our units.*
- Explore copy center utilization once it is fully operational
 - *We have rolled out the copy center in three elementary schools with a fourth set to begin next week. All of the elementary schools will be fully functional by the end of the year. The secondary schools will occur next year at which time we can explore ways to support the Town.*

Collaborate with youth athletics to effectively manage our school sites

- Meet each season with youth sports leaders to effectively communicate expectations as well as enhance communication between all involved
 - *This continues to occur season by season. Most recently we have set up a procedure whereby all of the youth programs contribute to increased security which is a change from last year where only the DJFL and DLAX supported the effort. The contributions are scaled based on usage but in order to create equity and fairness all of the groups are now supporting this work.*
- Work with groups to get them to share in the responsibility for paying for additional security when needed and when created by their usage of the fields
 - *See above.*

Facilities

Update security district wide, including managing parking and traffic flow on all campuses

- Create buzz in system at high school
 - *Installed a buzzer system at the front door to the High School linking the main office, sign in desk*

and welcome center to the technology.

- Install guard rails at high school to manage traffic
 - *A wooden guide rail has been installed along the High School oval between Noroton Avenue and High School Lane.*
- Collaborate with neighbors with large parking lots for large high school events to better manage overflow
- Block off the underside of the DHS “bridge” to better secure the courtyard
 - *In process. We are in the final stages of the design of the security fencing that will allow us to better secure the courtyard at the High School.*
- Create visitor protocols at all entrances at all schools and ensure they are being enforced
 - *Uniform standards have been created for all Campus Monitors to follow.*

Manage construction including, stadium east, cafeteria, locker pods and Hindley front entrance

- Update the board on a regular basis regarding progress of all ongoing construction projects in the district. This includes the timing of projects, project status and likely completion dates.
 - *Stadium East and the locker pods have been completed. The design work has begun on the Hindley front entrance. The concept for the High School cafeteria design has been selected and incorporated into our capital plan. Awaiting funding.*

Coordinate and manage master plan and five year building conditions survey

- Present to the board a completed master plan and building conditions report sometime in October
 - *Master Plan and building condition survey have been presented to the Board Facilities Committee.*
- Use information to create a true priority list for the upcoming budget
 - *Information has been used to modify and expand the 5 year plan.*
- Utilize the architect to help guide the district in logical next steps
 - *District continues to work with the architect on next steps in the process.*
- Engage the facilities committee as a key partner in moving the work forward
 - *The facilities committee has been an integral partner in the development of the program and has helped keep the team focused and moving forward.*

Technology

Implement Chromebook Initiative (4-7), collect feedback from stakeholders and make recommendations for the future.

- In the first ten weeks of the school year roll out one to one chromebooks to all students in grades 4-7.
 - *This was accomplished and as you know from the presentations we are fully implemented grades 4-8.*
- Poll students, teachers and parents around the device’s usefulness.
 - *This will be done by the end of the year.*
- Engage in ongoing professional development for teachers during the school year. All teachers in grades 4-7 should be fully trained in the effective use of the device in their classroom.
 - *This is an ongoing process. However, we have utilized a significant amount of our PD time during this school year to accomplish a smooth rollout of the iPads.*
- Google classroom used as the standard platform.
 - *This has been accomplished. The expectation is that every teacher will have a google site and google classroom as their students receive a 1:1 device.*

Rollout pilot of copy center, followed by implementation at each of the elementary schools.

- Build out copy center in Central Office.
 - *This has been done and the copy center is fully operational.*
- Begin pilot at Tokeneke in September. Remove all printers and move to a copier model. Work out any issues that might occur. Should be fully functional within first ten weeks of school.
 - *This timeline was met. We learned a lot from this first school which has helped us greatly moving into other buildings. All personal printers have been removed.*
- Second school to roll out will be Holmes. Follow the same model as Tokeneke. Final three school to be completed prior to completion of the school year.
 - *We continue to be on schedule with Tokeneke, Holmes and Hindley up and running. Ox Ridge will*

go on line in the next two weeks followed by Royle.

- Secondary schools to come on board in year two of the project.
 - *Again, we are on schedule to complete this two year rollout.*

Implement 1:1 Pilot at DHS with the use of iPads:

- Train a group of volunteer teachers on the functional use of iPads in their classroom
 - *Six teacher are poised to begin the pilot with iPads due to be delivered to students on March 13. These teachers have met throughout the year to prepare for the rollout.*
- Distribute 100 iPads to students as a test to see how to best utilize the model
 - *86 students will participate in the pilot. Marc Marin will give a full report to the BOE before the year ends.*
- Teachers train during the first quarter
 - *Training and research into best practices was a lengthier process than first thought. As a result iPads are being rolled out later than first anticipated.*
- Students receive iPads beginning second quarter
 - *We are slightly behind this schedule. The general feeling was that it should not be rushed prior to doing the appropriate research and having the teachers fully trained.*
- Data collected during quarter two and three in order to make adjustments as needed
 - *Data collection will take place prior to the end of the school year so appropriate adjustments can be made prior to the start of the new school year.*
- New group of teachers begin training in quarter 4 with the goal of rolling out a full grade level the following year
 - *Many more teachers have been trained and participated through the technology committee than just the six who are participating in the pilot. As a result there has been a critical mass of teachers who will be able to help with the roll out of the device next year.*

Increase the opportunities to “go green” with the influx of technology:

- Information to students and parents will be provided digitally whenever feasible acknowledging the trends in education and the business world.
 - *We have consistently pushed to deliver as much information digitally as possible.*
- First big shift will be in elementary school opening day information
 - *This was accomplished.*
- This corresponds with the 1:1 initiative where the emphasis will using devices instead of paper except where it is not educationally sound to do so.
 - *While we have not collected the data as of yet anecdotally, there is no doubt that our amount of copying has decreased at our schools and particularly where we have implemented both the 1:1 and copier solution.*

DARIEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Darien, Connecticut

Series 5000: STUDENTS

Policy 5130

STUDENT ATTENDANCE ~~AND~~, TRUANCY AND CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

Regular and punctual student attendance in school is essential to the educational process. Connecticut state law places responsibility for assuring that students attend school with the parent or other person having control of the child. To assist parents and other persons in meeting this responsibility, the Board of Education, through its Superintendent, will adopt and maintain procedures to implement this policy.

In addition, the Board of Education takes seriously the issue of chronic absenteeism. To address this issue, the Board of Education, through its Superintendent, will adopt and maintain procedures regarding chronic absenteeism in accordance with state law.

Legal References:

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-220

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-184

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-186

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198a

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198b

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198c

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198d

Public Act 16-147, "An Act Concerning the Recommendations of the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee"

Guidelines for Reporting Student Attendance in the Public School Information System (Connecticut State Department of Education, January 2008)

Connecticut State Department of Education Circular Letter C-2, Utilizing Local Support Resources Prior to Referral of Students for Family with Service Needs (August 4, 2009)

Connecticut State Board of Education Memorandum, Definitions of Excused and Unexcused Absences (June 27, 2012)

Connecticut State Department of Education, Guidelines for Implementation of the Definitions of Excused and Unexcused Absences and Best Practices for Absence Prevention and Intervention (April 2013)

ADOPTED: June 9, 2009
REVISED: July 17, 2013

6/26/16

**Series 5100: Students
Policy R -5130.25**

**ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS REGARDING
ATTENDANCE AND TRUANCY AND CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM**

I. Attendance and Truancy

A. Definitions for Section I

1. ~~"Student" - a student enrolled in the Darien Public Schools.~~ "Absence" - any day during which a student is not considered "in attendance" at his/her assigned school, or on a school sponsored activity (e.g. field trip), for at least one half of the school day.

2. ~~"Unexcused absence" - any absence from a regularly scheduled school day, which absence is not an excused absence.~~
"Disciplinary absence" - Any absence as a result of school or district disciplinary action. Any student serving an out-of-school suspension or expulsion should be considered absent. Such absence is not considered excused or unexcused for attendance and truancy purposes.

3. ~~"Excused absence" - an absence from a regularly scheduled school day which, as determined by the building principal [or his/her designee], is for:~~
 - a. ~~reasons of health, including illness, incapacity, or doctor's visits. The administration reserves the right to require physician or other appropriate certification for health related absences.~~

 - b. "Educational evaluation" - for purposes of this policy, an educational evaluation is an assessment of a student's educational development, which, based upon the student's presenting characteristics, would assess (as appropriate) the following areas: health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status and motor abilities.

4. "Excused absence" - a student is considered excused from school if the school has received written documentation describing the reason for the absence within ten (10) school days of the student's return to school, or if the child has been excluded from school in accordance with section 10-210 of the Connecticut General Statutes (regarding communicable diseases), and the following criteria are met:

a. Any absence before the student's tenth (10th) absence is considered excused when the student's parent/guardian approves such absence and submits appropriate written documentation in accordance with this regulation.

b. For the student's tenth (10th) absence and all absences thereafter, a student's absences from school are, with appropriate documentation in accordance with this regulation, considered excused only for the following reasons:

i. student illness (verified by an appropriately licensed medical professional);

ii. religious holidays;

e. court appearance;

iii. mandated court appearances (documentation required);

iv.

d. funeral or death in the family;

e. approved school activities, including field trips;

f. suspension or expulsion;

g. in limited circumstances, special activities or emergencies with the consent of the parent or other person having control of the child.

4. "Disciplinary absences" - absences that are the result of school or district disciplinary action are excluded from "unexcused" and "excused" absences, or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family;

v. extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by the district administrators and in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidance and this regulation;

vi. lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends.

c. A student, age five (5) to eighteen (18), whose parent or legal guardian is an active duty member of the armed forces who has been called for duty, is on leave from or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be granted ten (10) days of excused absences in any school year, and, in the discretion of the administration, additional excused absences to visit such student's parent or legal guardian with respect to the parent's leave or deployment. In the case of such excused absences, the student and parent or legal guardian are responsible for obtaining assignments from the student's teacher prior to any period of excused absence, and for ensuring that such assignments are completed by the student prior to his or her return to school.

5. "Truant" - any student five to eighteen years of age, inclusive, who has four (4) unexcused absences from school in any one month or ten (10) unexcused absences from school in any school year.

"In Attendance" - Any day during which a student is present at the student's assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school, for at least half of the regular school day.

6. "Student" - a student enrolled in the Darien Public Schools.

7. "Truant" - any student five (5) to eighteen (18) years of age, inclusive, who has four (4) unexcused absences from school in any one month or ten (10) unexcused absences from school in any school year.

a.

8. "Unexcused absence" - any absence from a regularly scheduled

school day for at least one half of the school day, which is not excused or considered a disciplinary absence.

The determination of whether an absence is excused will be made by the building principal or his/her designee. Parents or other persons having control of the child may appeal that decision to the Superintendent or his/her designee, whose decision shall be final.

B. Written Documentation Requirements for Absences

1. Written documentation must be submitted for each incidence of absence within ten (10) school days of the student's return to school. Consecutive days of absence are considered one incidence of absence.
2. The first nine (9) days of absence will be excused upon receipt of a signed note from the student's parent/guardian, a signed note from a school official that spoke in person with the parent/guardian regarding the absence, or a note confirming the absence by the school nurse or by a licensed medical professional, as appropriate.
3. For the student's tenth (10th) absence, and all absences thereafter, documentation of the absence must be submitted in accordance with paragraphs 1 and 2 above, and must also include the reason for the absence and the following additional information:
 - a. student illness:
 - i. a signed note from a medical professional, who may be the school nurse, who has evaluated the student confirming the absence and giving an expected return date; or
 - ii. a signed note from school nurse who has spoken with the student's medical professional and confirmed the absence, including the date and location of the consultation.
 - b. religious holidays: none.
 - c. mandated court appearances:
 - i. a police summons;

- ii. a subpoena;
 - iii. a notice to appear;
 - iv. a signed note from a court official; or
 - v. any other official, written documentation of the legal requirement to appear in court.
- d. funeral or death in the family, or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family; a written document explaining the nature of the emergency.
 - e. extraordinary educational opportunity pre-approved by the district administrators and in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidance and this policy; written pre-approval from the administration, in accordance with this regulation.
 - f. lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends: none.
- 4. Neither e-mail nor text message shall serve to satisfy the requirement of written documentation. In rare and extraordinary circumstances, a building administrator may, in his/her own discretion, accept the delivery of written documentation through a scanned copy sent by e-mail.
 - 5. The Darien Public Schools reserves the right to randomly audit written documentation received, through telephone and other methods of communication, to determine its authenticity.
 - 6. Any absence that is not documented in accordance with this regulation within ten (10) school days after the incidence of absence will be recorded as unexcused. If documentation is provided within ten (10) school days, but is incomplete, the building principal may, at his/her own discretion, grant up to a five (5) school day extension for provision of the completed documentation.

C. Extraordinary Educational Opportunities

- 1. To qualify as an extraordinary educational opportunity, the opportunity must:

- a. be educational in nature and must have a learning objective related to the student's course work or plan of study;
 - b. be an opportunity not ordinarily available to the student;
 - c. be grade and developmentally appropriate; and
 - d. include content that is highly relevant to the student; while some opportunities will be relevant to all students, others will contain very specific content that would limit their relevance to a smaller group of students.
2. Family vacations do not qualify as extraordinary educational opportunities.
3. No student enrolled in the Darien Public Schools can be enrolled in another public or private school or program during Darien school hours. Such dual enrollment will not be considered an extraordinary educational opportunity.
4. All requests for approval of extraordinary educational opportunities must:
 - a. be submitted to the Superintendent in writing prior to the opportunity, but no later than ten (10) school days prior to the opportunity except in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the building administrator;
 - b. contain the signatures of both the parent/guardian and the student;
 - c. include an outline of the learning objective of the opportunity and include detail as to how the objective is linked to the student's coursework or plan of study; and
 - d. include additional documentation, where available, about the opportunity.
5. The Superintendent shall provide a response in writing and include the following:
 - a. either approval or denial of the request;
 - b. brief reason for any denial;

- c. any requirements placed upon the student as a condition of approval;
 - d. the specific days approved as excused absences for the opportunity;
 - e. the understanding that the Superintendent may withdraw its approval if the opportunity is canceled or the student fails to meet the agreed-upon requirements of the approval.
- 6. All decisions of the Superintendent relating to extraordinary educational opportunities shall be final.
 - 7. Students who are granted excusal from school to participate in extraordinary educational opportunities are expected to share their experiences with other students and/or school staff when they return.
 - 8. Approval for an extraordinary educational opportunity is determined on a case-by-case basis and the analysis of individualized factors. An opportunity approved for one student may not be approved for another.

D. Truancy Exceptions:

- 1. A student **five (5) or six (6) years of age** shall not be considered truant if the parent or person having control over such student has appeared personally at the school district office and exercised the option of not sending the child to school at five (5) or six (6) years of age.
- ~~b. 2.~~ A student ~~sixteen or~~ **seventeen (17) years of age** shall not be considered truant if the parent or person having control over such student consents to such student's withdrawal from school. Such parent or person shall personally appear at the school district office and sign a withdrawal form indicating such consent. Such withdrawal form must include an attestation from a guidance counselor or school administrator from the school that the district provided the parent (or person having control of the child) with information on the educational options available in the school system and community.
- ~~e. 3.~~ If a parent or guardian of an expelled student chooses not to enroll the student in an alternative program, the student shall not be considered to be "truant."

~~B. Ages of Attendance~~

- a. ~~Kindergarten: Children who will be five years old on or before January 1 will be eligible to enter kindergarten in September of that school year.~~
- b. ~~First Grade: Children reaching the age of six on or before January 1 shall be eligible to enter the first grade in September of that school year. Children younger than age six on January 1 shall be admitted to first grade only upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools. Once eligible, a student's admittance to first grade will be made in accordance with the Board's promotion and retention policy.~~
- c. ~~Other Grades: Admission of children to other grades shall be made in accordance with the Board's promotion and retention policy.~~

E. ~~Readmission to School Following Voluntary Withdrawal~~

- 1. Except as noted in paragraph 2 below, if a student voluntarily withdraws from school (in accordance with Section D.2, above) and subsequently seeks readmission, the Board may deny school accommodations to the student for up to ninety (90) school days from the date of the student's withdrawal from school.
- 2. If a student who has voluntarily withdrawn from school (in accordance with Section D.2, above) seeks readmission within ten (10) school days of his/her withdrawal, the Board shall provide school accommodations to the student not later than three (3) school days after the student requests readmission.

F. ~~Determinations of Whether a Student is "In Attendance":~~

- 1. A student serving an out of school suspension or expulsion shall be reported as absent unless he or she receives an alternative educational program for at least one half of the regular school day. In any event, the absence is considered a disciplinary absence, and will not be designated as excused or unexcused.
- 2. On early dismissal days and days shortened due to inclement weather, the regular school day for attendance purposes is considered to be the amount of instructional time offered to students on that day. For example, if school is open for four hours on a shortened day scheduled, a student must be present for a minimum of two hours in order to be considered "in attendance."
- 3. Students placed on homebound instruction due to illness or injury in accordance with applicable regulations and requirements are counted as being "in attendance" for every day that they receive

instruction from an appropriately certified teacher for an amount of time deemed adequate in accordance with applicable law.

CG. Procedures for students in grades K-12

1. Notification

~~a. a.~~ Annually at the beginning of the school year and upon the enrollment of any child during the school year, the administration shall notify the parent or other person having control of the student enrolled in grades K - 12 in writing of the obligations pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-184 to ~~assure~~ensure that such a student attends school regularly or to show that the child is elsewhere receiving equivalent instruction in the studies taught in the Darien Public Schools.

~~b. b.~~ Annually at the beginning of the school year and upon the enrollment of any child during the school year, the administration shall obtain from the parent or other person having control of the student in grades K-12 a telephone number ~~for or other means of~~ contacting such parent or other person during the school day.

2. Monitoring

Each school shall implement a system of monitoring individual unexcused absences of students in grades K-12. Whenever such a student fails to report to school on a regularly scheduled school day, school personnel under the direction of the building principal, shall make a reasonable effort to notify the parent or other person having control of such student by telephone and by mail of the student's absence, unless school personnel have received an indication that the parent or other person is aware of the student's absence that four unexcused absences from school in a month or 10 unexcused absences in a school year may result in a complaint filed with the Superior Court pursuant to section 46b-149 of the Connecticut General Statutes alleging the belief that the acts or omissions of the child are such that the child's family is a family with service needs. Any person who, in good faith, gives or fails to give such notice shall be immune from liability, civil or criminal, which might otherwise be incurred or imposed and shall have the same immunity with respect to any judicial proceeding which results from such notice or failure to give notice.

DH. Procedures applicable to students ages five (5) to eighteen (18)

1. Intervention

~~a.~~ a. When a student is truant, the building principal ~~for his/her designee~~ shall schedule a meeting with the parent (or other person having control of such student) and appropriate school personnel to review and evaluate the reasons for the student's truancy. This meeting shall be held no later than **ten (10) days** after the student becomes truant. ~~If the~~ The district shall document the meeting, and if parent or other person declines to attend the meeting, or is otherwise is non responsive, that fact shall also be documented and the meeting shall proceed with school personnel in attendance.

~~b.~~ b. When a student is truant, the Superintendent or his/her designee shall coordinate services with and referrals of students to community agencies providing child and family services, as appropriate. The district shall document efforts to contact and include families and to provide early intervention in truancy matters.

~~b. c.~~ If the parent or other person having control of a student who is truant fails to attend the meeting held pursuant to subsection H.1.a., above, or otherwise fails to cooperate with the school in attempting to solve the truancy problem, the Superintendent shall file, within fifteen (15) calendar days of such failure to attend the meeting or other failure to cooperate with the school in attempting to solve the truancy problem, for such truant a written complaint with the Superior Court pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 46b - 149 alleging the belief that the acts or omissions of the truant are such that his/her family is a family with service needs.

~~c.~~ The Superintendent or his/her designee shall coordinate services with and referrals of students to community agencies providing child and family services, as appropriate.

~~d.~~ d. In addition to the procedures specified in subsections a through c above, a regular education student who is experiencing attendance problems ~~shall~~ should be referred to the building Child Study Team for program review for other appropriate school based team] to consider the need for additional interventions and/or assistance. The Team will ~~review~~ also consider whether the student's need for referral for should be referred to a planning and placement team ("PPT") meeting

to review the student's need and eligibility for special education. A special education student who is experiencing attendance problems ~~shall~~should be referred ~~for~~to a PPT meeting for program review.

- e. If a family with service needs petition is filed and the court orders an educational evaluation of the student, the district shall conduct an appropriate educational evaluation if no such evaluation has been performed within the preceding year.
- i. For a regular education student, the educational evaluation will be conducted or arranged for by appropriate school personnel and coordinated through the Child Study Team [or other appropriate school based team]. Upon completion of the evaluation of a regular education student, the Child Study Team [or other appropriate school based team] shall review the evaluations and make appropriate recommendations for alternative procedures, programs or interventions. Such recommendations may include a referral of the student for further evaluation and/or consideration for special education eligibility.
- ii. In the case of a student who requires or may require special education and related services, the district shall convene a PPT to determine what evaluations may be appropriate to assess any specific areas of concern. The PPT shall reconvene to review the evaluations and make appropriate recommendations regarding the student's need for special education services and the need, if any, to write and/or revise the student's individualized education program ("IEP").

I. Attendance Records

All attendance records developed by the Board shall include the individual student's state-assigned student identifier (SASID).

II. Chronic Absenteeism

A. Definitions for Section II

- 1. "Chronically absent child" - a child who is enrolled in a school under the jurisdiction of the Darien Board of Education and whose total number of absences at any time during a school year is equal to or greater than ten percent (10%) of the total number of days

that such student has been enrolled at such school during such school year;

2. “Absence” - (a) an excused absence, unexcused absence or disciplinary absence, as those terms are defined by the State Board of Education pursuant to section 10-198b of the general statutes and these administrative regulations, or (b) an in-school suspension, as defined in section 10-233a of the general statutes, that is greater than or equal to one-half of a school day;
3. “District chronic absenteeism rate” - the total number of chronically absent children under the jurisdiction of the Darien Board of Education in the previous school year divided by the total number of children under the jurisdiction of the Board of Education for such school year; and
4. “School chronic absenteeism rate” - the total number of chronically absent children for a school in the previous school year divided by the total number of children enrolled in such school for such school year.

B. Establishment of Attendance Review Teams

If the Darien Board of Education has a district chronic absenteeism rate of ten percent (10%) or higher, it shall establish an attendance review team for the school district.

If a school under the jurisdiction of the Darien Board of Education has a school chronic absenteeism rate of fifteen percent (15%) or higher, it shall establish an attendance review team for that school.

If the Darien Board of Education has more than one school with a school chronic absenteeism rate of fifteen percent (15%) or higher, it shall establish an attendance review team for the school district or at each such school.

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C. Composition and Role of Attendance Review Teams

Any attendance review team established under these regulations may include school administrators, guidance counselors, school social workers, teachers, representatives from community-based programs who address

issues related to student attendance by providing programs and services to truants, as defined under I.A.7, and chronically absent children and their parents or guardians.

Each attendance review team shall be responsible for reviewing the cases of truants and chronically absent children, discussing school interventions and community referrals for such truants and chronically absent children and making any additional recommendations for such truants and chronically absent children and their parents or guardians. Each attendance review team shall meet at least monthly.

D. State Chronic Absenteeism Prevention and Intervention Plan

The Darien Board of Education and its attendance review teams, if any, will consider any chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan developed by the State Department of Education.

III. Reports to the State Regarding Truancy Data

Annually, each local and regional board of education shall include information regarding the number of truants and chronically absent children in the strategic school profile report for each school under its jurisdiction and for the school district as a whole submitted to the Commissioner of Education. Measures of truancy include the type of data that is required to be collected by the Department of Education regarding attendance and unexcused absences in order for the department to comply with federal reporting requirements and the actions taken by the board of education to reduce truancy in the school district.

Legal References:

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-220

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-184

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-186

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198a

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198b

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198c

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198d

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Guidelines for Reporting Student Attendance in the Public School Information System (Connecticut State Department of Education, January 2008)

Connecticut State Department of Education Circular Letter C-2, *Utilizing Local Support Resources Prior to Referral of Students for Family with Service Needs* (August 4, 2009)

Connecticut State Board of Education Memorandum, *Definitions of Excused and Unexcused Absences* (June 27, 2012)

Connecticut State Department of Education, *Guidelines for Implementation of the Definitions of Excused and Unexcused Absences and Best Practices for Absence Prevention and Intervention* (April 2013)

APPROVED: ~~June 9, 2009~~
REVISED: ~~July 17, 2013~~

6/26/16

SAMPLE NOTIFICATION REGARDING STUDENT ATTENDANCE*

Regular and punctual student attendance is essential to the educational process. Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-184 provides that "[e]ach parent or other person having control of a child five years of age and over and under eighteen years of age shall cause such child to attend a public day school regularly during the hours and terms the public school in the district wherein such child resides is in session, unless such child is a high school graduate or the parent or person having control of such child is able to show that the child is elsewhere receiving equivalent instruction in the studies taught in the public schools. . . . The parent or person having control of a child seventeen years of age may consent, as provided in this section, to such child's withdrawal from school. Such parent or person shall personally appear at the school district office and sign a withdrawal form. Such withdrawal form shall include an attestation from a guidance counselor or school administrator of the school that such school district has provided such parent or person with information on the educational options available in the school system and community. The parent or person having control of a child five years of age shall have the option of not sending the child to school until the child is six years of age and the parent or person having control of a child six years of age shall have the option of not sending the child to school until the child is seven years of age. The parent or person shall exercise such option by personally appearing at the school district office and signing an option form. The school district shall provide the parent or person with information on the educational opportunities available in the school system."

In order to assist parents and other persons in meeting this responsibility, the Board of Education monitors unexcused student absences and makes reasonable efforts to notify parents or other persons by contacting them when a student fails to report to school. State law provides that any person who, in good faith, gives or fails to give such notice shall be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, which might otherwise be incurred or imposed and shall have the same immunity with respect to any judicial proceeding which results from such notice or failure to give such notice. The Board, therefore, must obtain a telephone number or other means of contacting parents or other persons during the school day.

Please provide the following information and return the completed form, signed and dated to:

Student's Name: _____

Address: _____

School/grade: _____ / _____
Parent/Guardian's Daytime Telephone Number*: _____
Parent/Guardian's Daytime Telephone Number*: _____
Daytime Telephone Number* of _____
Other Person Having Control
of Student: _____ Relationship to Student: _____

*If no daytime telephone number is available, please specify other means by
which school personnel may contact you during the school day. _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Darien Board of Education
Extraordinary Educational Experience Request Form

Pursuant to guidelines from the Connecticut Department of Education, the Darien Public Schools will consider certain extraordinary educational experiences to be excused absences. In order for an experience to qualify as an extraordinary educational experience, the opportunity must be educational in nature and must have a learning objective specifically related to the student's coursework or plan of study. It is important to note that not all memorable and/or life experiences are considered extraordinary educational experiences for the purpose of an excused absence. In order to qualify, the experience must be an opportunity not ordinarily available to the student. The experience must be grade and developmentally appropriate and the content of the experience must be highly relevant to the individual student. Whether an experience fits the requirements of an extraordinary educational experience for the purpose of an excused absence is a determination within the discretion of the building principal or his/her designee.

To request consideration of an experience as an extraordinary educational experience, the following form must be filled out, signed by the parent and student, and returned at least five (5) school days in advance of the date of the opportunity. Please note that approval is not assured. Approvals are awarded on a case-by- case basis and are based on a number of factors. An experience approved for one student does not guarantee that it will be approved for others.

Name of Student _____ Today's Date _____

Title of Educational Opportunity

Please describe the learning objective of the educational opportunity and how the objective is linked to the student's coursework or plan of study (you may attach additional sheets):

Date(s) of educational opportunity

Dates and total number of days of planned absence

Signature of Parent_____

Signature of Student_____

For Office Use Only. _____ Received by _____ on _____ . Approved? Yes/No By _____ .

DARIEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Darien, Connecticut

Series 5000: STUDENTS
Policy 5130

STUDENT ATTENDANCE, TRUANCY AND CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

Regular and punctual student attendance in school is essential to the educational process. Connecticut state law places responsibility for assuring that students attend school with the parent or other person having control of the child. To assist parents and other persons in meeting this responsibility, the Board of Education, through its Superintendent, will adopt and maintain procedures to implement this policy.

In addition, the Board of Education takes seriously the issue of chronic absenteeism. To address this issue, the Board of Education, through its Superintendent, will adopt and maintain procedures regarding chronic absenteeism in accordance with state law.

Legal References:

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-220

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-184

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-186

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198a

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Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198c

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Connecticut State Department of Education, *Guidelines for Implementation of the Definitions of Excused and Unexcused Absences and Best Practices for Absence Prevention and Intervention* (April 2013)

ADOPTED _____

6/26/16

DRAFT

**ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS REGARDING
ATTENDANCE, TRUANCY AND CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM**

I. Attendance and Truancy

A. Definitions for Section I

1. "Absence" - any day during which a student is not considered "in attendance" at his/her assigned school, or on a school sponsored activity (e.g. field trip), for at least one half of the school day.
2. "Disciplinary absence" - Any absence as a result of school or district disciplinary action. Any student serving an out-of-school suspension or expulsion should be considered absent. Such absence is not considered excused or unexcused for attendance and truancy purposes.
3. "Educational evaluation" - for purposes of this policy, an educational evaluation is an assessment of a student's educational development, which, based upon the student's presenting characteristics, would assess (as appropriate) the following areas: health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status and motor abilities.
4. "Excused absence" - a student is considered excused from school if the school has received written documentation describing the reason for the absence within ten (10) school days of the student's return to school, or if the child has been excluded from school in accordance with section 10-210 of the Connecticut General Statutes (regarding communicable diseases), and the following criteria are met:
 - a. Any absence before the student's tenth (10th) absence is considered excused when the student's parent/guardian approves such absence and submits appropriate written documentation in accordance with this regulation.
 - b. For the student's tenth (10th) absence and all absences thereafter, a student's absences from school are, with appropriate documentation in accordance with this

regulation, considered excused only for the following reasons:

- i. student illness (verified by an appropriately licensed medical professional);
 - ii. religious holidays;
 - iii. mandated court appearances (documentation required);
 - iv. funeral or death in the family, or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family;
 - v. extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by the district administrators and in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidance and this regulation;
 - vi. lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends.
- c. A student, age five (5) to eighteen (18), whose parent or legal guardian is an active duty member of the armed forces who has been called for duty, is on leave from or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be granted ten (10) days of excused absences in any school year, and, in the discretion of the administration, additional excused absences to visit such student's parent or legal guardian with respect to the parent's leave or deployment. In the case of such excused absences, the student and parent or legal guardian are responsible for obtaining assignments from the student's teacher prior to any period of excused absence, and for ensuring that such assignments are completed by the student prior to his or her return to school.
- 5. "In Attendance" - Any day during which a student is present at the student's assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school, for at least half of the regular school day.
 - 6. "Student" - a student enrolled in the Darien Public Schools.
 - 7. "Truant" - any student **five (5) to eighteen (18)** years of age, inclusive, who has **four (4)** unexcused absences from school in any

one month or **ten (10)** unexcused absences from school in any school year.

8. "Unexcused absence" - any absence from a regularly scheduled school day for at least one half of the school day, which is not excused or considered a disciplinary absence.

The determination of whether an absence is excused will be made by the building principal or his/her designee. Parents or other persons having control of the child may appeal that decision to the Superintendent or his/her designee, whose decision shall be final.

B. Written Documentation Requirements for Absences

1. Written documentation must be submitted for each incidence of absence within ten (10) school days of the student's return to school. Consecutive days of absence are considered one incidence of absence.
2. The first nine (9) days of absence will be excused upon receipt of a signed note from the student's parent/guardian, a signed note from a school official that spoke in person with the parent/guardian regarding the absence, or a note confirming the absence by the school nurse or by a licensed medical professional, as appropriate.
3. For the student's tenth (10th) absence, and all absences thereafter, documentation of the absence must be submitted in accordance with paragraphs 1 and 2 above, and must also include the reason for the absence and the following additional information:
 - a. student illness:
 - i. a signed note from a medical professional, who may be the school nurse, who has evaluated the student confirming the absence and giving an expected return date; or
 - ii. a signed note from school nurse who has spoken with the student's medical professional and confirmed the absence, including the date and location of the consultation.
 - b. religious holidays: none.
 - c. mandated court appearances:

- i. a police summons;
 - ii. a subpoena;
 - iii. a notice to appear;
 - iv. a signed note from a court official; or
 - v. any other official, written documentation of the legal requirement to appear in court.
 - d. funeral or death in the family, or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family: a written document explaining the nature of the emergency.
 - e. extraordinary educational opportunity pre-approved by the district administrators and in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidance and this policy: written pre-approval from the administration, in accordance with this regulation.
 - f. lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends: none.
4. Neither e-mail nor text message shall serve to satisfy the requirement of written documentation. In rare and extraordinary circumstances, a building administrator may, in his/her own discretion, accept the delivery of written documentation through a scanned copy sent by e-mail.
5. The Darien Public Schools reserves the right to randomly audit written documentation received, through telephone and other methods of communication, to determine its authenticity.
6. Any absence that is not documented in accordance with this regulation within ten (10) school days after the incidence of absence will be recorded as unexcused. If documentation is provided within ten (10) school days, but is incomplete, the building principal may, at his/her own discretion, grant up to a five (5) school day extension for provision of the completed documentation.

C. Extraordinary Educational Opportunities

1. To qualify as an extraordinary educational opportunity, the opportunity must:

- a. be educational in nature and must have a learning objective related to the student's course work or plan of study;
 - b. be an opportunity not ordinarily available to the student;
 - c. be grade and developmentally appropriate; and
 - d. include content that is highly relevant to the student; while some opportunities will be relevant to all students, others will contain very specific content that would limit their relevance to a smaller group of students.
2. Family vacations do not qualify as extraordinary educational opportunities.
3. No student enrolled in the Darien Public Schools can be enrolled in another public or private school or program during Darien school hours. Such dual enrollment will not be considered an extraordinary educational opportunity.
4. All requests for approval of extraordinary educational opportunities must:
 - a. be submitted to the building principal in writing prior to the opportunity, but no later than ten (10) school days prior to the opportunity except in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the building administrator;
 - b. contain the signatures of both the parent/guardian and the student;
 - c. include an outline of the learning objective of the opportunity and include detail as to how the objective is linked to the student's coursework or plan of study; and
 - d. include additional documentation, where available, about the opportunity.
5. The building principal shall provide a response in writing and include the following:
 - a. either approval or denial of the request;
 - b. brief reason for any denial;

- c. any requirements placed upon the student as a condition of approval;
 - d. the specific days approved as excused absences for the opportunity;
 - e. the understanding that the building administrator may withdraw its approval if the opportunity is canceled or the student fails to meet the agreed-upon requirements of the approval.
- 6. All decisions of the building principal relating to extraordinary educational opportunities shall be final.
 - 7. Students who are granted excusal from school to participate in extraordinary educational opportunities are expected to share their experiences with other students and/or school staff when they return.
 - 8. Approval for an extraordinary educational opportunity is determined on a case-by-case basis and the analysis of individualized factors. An opportunity approved for one student may not be approved for another.

D. Truancy Exceptions:

- 1. A student **five (5) or six (6) years of age** shall not be considered truant if the parent or person having control over such student has appeared personally at the school district office and exercised the option of not sending the child to school at five (5) or six (6) years of age.
- 2. A student **seventeen (17) years of age** shall not be considered truant if the parent or person having control over such student consents to such student's withdrawal from school. Such parent or person shall personally appear at the school district office and sign a withdrawal form indicating such consent. Such withdrawal form must include an attestation from a guidance counselor or school administrator from the school that the district provided the parent (or person having control of the child) with information on the educational options available in the school system and community.
- 3. If a parent or guardian of an expelled student chooses not to enroll the student in an alternative program, the student shall not be considered to be "truant."

E. Readmission to School Following Voluntary Withdrawal

1. Except as noted in paragraph 2 below, if a student voluntarily withdraws from school (in accordance with Section D.2, above) and subsequently seeks readmission, the Board may deny school accommodations to the student for up to ninety (90) school days from the date of the student's withdrawal from school.
2. If a student who has voluntarily withdrawn from school (in accordance with Section D.2, above) seeks readmission within ten (10) school days of his/her withdrawal, the Board shall provide school accommodations to the student not later than three (3) school days after the student requests readmission.

F. Determinations of Whether a Student is "In Attendance":

1. A student serving an out of school suspension or expulsion shall be reported as absent unless he or she receives an alternative educational program for at least one half of the regular school day. In any event, the absence is considered a disciplinary absence, and will not be designated as excused or unexcused.
2. On early dismissal days and days shortened due to inclement weather, the regular school day for attendance purposes is considered to be the amount of instructional time offered to students on that day. For example, if school is open for four hours on a shortened day scheduled, a student must be present for a minimum of two hours in order to be considered "in attendance."
3. Students placed on homebound instruction due to illness or injury in accordance with applicable regulations and requirements are counted as being "in attendance" for every day that they receive instruction from an appropriately certified teacher for an amount of time deemed adequate in accordance with applicable law.

G. Procedures for students in grades K-8*

1. Notification
 - a. Annually at the beginning of the school year and upon the enrollment of any child during the school year, the administration shall notify the parent or other person having control of the student enrolled in grades K - 8 in writing of the obligations pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-184 to ensure that such a student attends school regularly or to show that the child is elsewhere receiving

equivalent instruction in the studies taught in the Darien Public Schools.

- b. Annually at the beginning of the school year and upon the enrollment of any child during the school year, the administration shall obtain from the parent or other person having control of the student in grades K-8 a telephone number or other means of contacting such parent or other person during the school day.

2. Monitoring

Each school shall implement a system of monitoring individual unexcused absences of students in grades K-8. Whenever such a student fails to report to school on a regularly scheduled school day, school personnel under the direction of the building principal **[or his/her designee]** shall make a reasonable effort to notify the parent or other person having control of such student by telephone and by mail of the student's absence, unless school personnel have received an indication that the parent or other person is aware of the student's absence. **[Reasonable efforts shall include two (2) attempts to reach the parent or other person at the telephone number provided by the parent or other person. Such attempts shall be recorded on a form provided by the Superintendent.]** Mailed notice of the student's absence shall include a warning that two unexcused absences from school in a month or five unexcused absences in a school year may result in a complaint filed with the Superior Court pursuant to section 46b-149 of the Connecticut General Statutes alleging the belief that the acts or omissions of the child are such that the child's family is a family with service needs. Any person who, in good faith, gives or fails to give such notice shall be immune from liability, civil or criminal, which might otherwise be incurred or imposed and shall have the same immunity with respect to any judicial proceeding which results from such notice or failure to give notice.

*[*Note: State law mandates notification and monitoring only with regard to students in grades K-8. Boards of Education are free, however, to extend the application of monitoring and intervention procedures to students at all grade levels.]*

H. Procedures applicable to students ages five (5) to eighteen (18)

1. Intervention

- a. When a student is truant, the building principal or his/her designee shall schedule a meeting with the parent (or other person having control of such student) and appropriate school personnel to review and evaluate the reasons for the student's truancy. This meeting shall be held no later than **ten (10) days** after the student becomes truant. The district shall document the meeting, and if parent or other person declines to attend the meeting, or is otherwise is non responsive, that fact shall also be documented and the meeting shall proceed with school personnel in attendance.
- b. When a student is truant, the Superintendent or his/her designee shall coordinate services with and referrals of students to community agencies providing child and family services, as appropriate. The district shall document efforts to contact and include families and to provide early intervention in truancy matters.
- c. If the parent or other person having control of a student who is truant fails to attend the meeting held pursuant to subsection H.1.a., above, or otherwise fails to cooperate with the school in attempting to solve the truancy problem, the Superintendent shall file, within fifteen (15) calendar days of such failure to attend the meeting or other failure to cooperate with the school in attempting to solve the truancy problem, for such truant a written complaint with the Superior Court pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 46b-149 alleging the belief that the acts or omissions of the truant are such that his/her family is a family with service needs.
- d. In addition to the procedures specified in subsections a through c above, a regular education student who is experiencing attendance problems should be referred to the building Child Study Team **[or other appropriate school based team]** to consider the need for additional interventions and/or assistance. The Team will also consider whether the student should be referred to a planning and placement team ("PPT") meeting to review the student's need and eligibility for special education. A special education student who is experiencing attendance problems should be referred to a PPT meeting for program review.
- e. If a family with service needs petition is filed and the court orders an educational evaluation of the student, the district shall conduct an appropriate educational evaluation if no such evaluation has been performed within the preceding year.

- i. For a regular education student, the educational evaluation will be conducted or arranged for by appropriate school personnel and coordinated through the Child Study Team **[or other appropriate school based team]**. Upon completion of the evaluation of a regular education student, the Child Study Team **[or other appropriate school based team]** shall review the evaluations and make appropriate recommendations for alternative procedures, programs or interventions. Such recommendations may include a referral of the student for further evaluation and/or consideration for special education eligibility.
- ii. In the case of a student who requires or may require special education and related services, the district shall convene a PPT to determine what evaluations may be appropriate to assess any specific areas of concern. The PPT shall reconvene to review the evaluations and make appropriate recommendations regarding the student's need for special education services and the need, if any, to write and/or revise the student's individualized education program ("IEP").

I. Attendance Records

All attendance records developed by the Board shall include the individual student's state-assigned student identifier (SASID).

II. Chronic Absenteeism

A. Definitions for Section II

1. "Chronically absent child" - a child who is enrolled in a school under the jurisdiction of the Darien Board of Education and whose total number of absences at any time during a school year is equal to or greater than ten percent (10%) of the total number of days that such student has been enrolled at such school during such school year;
2. "Absence" - (a) an excused absence, unexcused absence or disciplinary absence, as those terms are defined by the State Board of Education pursuant to section 10-198b of the general statutes and these administrative regulations, or (b) an in-school suspension, as defined in section 10-233a of the general statutes, that is greater than or equal to one-half of a school day;

3. "District chronic absenteeism rate" - the total number of chronically absent children under the jurisdiction of the Darien Board of Education in the previous school year divided by the total number of children under the jurisdiction of the Board of Education for such school year; and
4. "School chronic absenteeism rate" - the total number of chronically absent children for a school in the previous school year divided by the total number of children enrolled in such school for such school year.

B. Establishment of Attendance Review Teams

If the Darien Board of Education has a district chronic absenteeism rate of ten percent (10%) or higher, it shall establish an attendance review team for the school district.

If a school under the jurisdiction of the Darien Board of Education has a school chronic absenteeism rate of fifteen percent (15%) or higher, it shall establish an attendance review team for that school.

If the Darien Board of Education has more than one school with a school chronic absenteeism rate of fifteen percent (15%) or higher, it shall establish an attendance review team for the school district or at each such school.

If the Darien Board of Education has a district chronic absenteeism rate of ten percent (10%) or higher and one or more schools with a school chronic absenteeism rate of fifteen percent (15%) or higher, it shall establish an attendance review team for the school district or at each such school.

C. Composition and Role of Attendance Review Teams

Any attendance review team established under these regulations may include school administrators, guidance counselors, school social workers, teachers, representatives from community-based programs who address issues related to student attendance by providing programs and services to truants, as defined under I.A.7, and chronically absent children and their parents or guardians.

Each attendance review team shall be responsible for reviewing the cases of truants and chronically absent children, discussing school interventions and community referrals for such truants and chronically absent children and making any additional recommendations for such truants and chronically absent children and their parents or guardians. Each attendance review team shall meet at least monthly.

D. State Chronic Absenteeism Prevention and Intervention Plan

The Darien Board of Education and its attendance review teams, if any, will consider any chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan developed by the State Department of Education.

III. Reports to the State Regarding Truancy Data

Annually, each local and regional board of education shall include information regarding the number of truants and chronically absent children in the strategic school profile report for each school under its jurisdiction and for the school district as a whole submitted to the Commissioner of Education. Measures of truancy include the type of data that is required to be collected by the Department of Education regarding attendance and unexcused absences in order for the department to comply with federal reporting requirements and the actions taken by the board of education to reduce truancy in the school district.

Legal References:

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-220

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-184

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-186

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198a

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198b

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198c

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APPROVED: _____

6/26/16

DRAFT

SAMPLE NOTIFICATION REGARDING STUDENT ATTENDANCE*

Regular and punctual student attendance is essential to the educational process. Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-184 provides that “[e]ach parent or other person having control of a child five years of age and over and under eighteen years of age shall cause such child to attend a public day school regularly during the hours and terms the public school in the district wherein such child resides is in session, unless such child is a high school graduate or the parent or person having control of such child is able to show that the child is elsewhere receiving equivalent instruction in the studies taught in the public schools. . . . The parent or person having control of a child seventeen years of age may consent, as provided in this section, to such child’s withdrawal from school. Such parent or person shall personally appear at the school district office and sign a withdrawal form. Such withdrawal form shall include an attestation from a guidance counselor or school administrator of the school that such school district has provided such parent or person with information on the educational options available in the school system and community. The parent or person having control of a child five years of age shall have the option of not sending the child to school until the child is six years of age and the parent or person having control of a child six years of age shall have the option of not sending the child to school until the child is seven years of age. The parent or person shall exercise such option by personally appearing at the school district office and signing an option form. The school district shall provide the parent or person with information on the educational opportunities available in the school system.”

In order to assist parents and other persons in meeting this responsibility, the _____ Board of Education monitors unexcused student absences and makes reasonable efforts to notify parents or other persons by contacting them when a student fails to report to school. State law provides that any person who, in good faith, gives or fails to give such notice shall be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, which might otherwise be incurred or imposed and shall have the same immunity with respect to any judicial proceeding which results from such notice or failure to give such notice. The Board, therefore, must obtain a telephone number or other means of contacting parents or other persons during the school day.

Please provide the following information and return the completed form, signed and dated to:

Student's Name: _____

Address: _____

School/grade: _____ / _____

Parent/Guardian's Daytime Telephone Number*: _____

Parent/Guardian's Daytime Telephone Number*: _____

Daytime Telephone Number* of

Other Person Having Control

of Student: _____ Relationship to Student: _____

*If no daytime telephone number is available, please specify other means by which school personnel may contact you during the school day. _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

[*Note: State law mandates notification only with regard to students in grades K-8. Boards of Education are free, however, to extend the notification to parents of students at all grade levels.]

6/26/16

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES DOCUMENTATION LOG

Date _____

School _____

School Staff Member/ Volunteer	Student's Name	Parent or Other Person Having Control of Student	Telephone Number	Outcome*	Excused or Unexcused	Reason Absence is Excused or Unexcused
				Attempt #1 _____ Attempt #2 _____ Written Notice mailed _____		
				Attempt #1 _____ Attempt #2 _____ Written Notice mailed _____		
				Attempt #1 _____ Attempt #2 _____ Written Notice mailed _____		
				Attempt #1 _____ Attempt #2 _____ Written Notice mailed _____		
				Attempt #1 _____ Attempt #2 _____ Written Notice mailed _____		

* No answer = N
Left Message = LM
Notification made = NM
May 2013
5281297v1

[] **Board of Education**

Extraordinary Educational Experience Request Form

Pursuant to guidelines from the Connecticut Department of Education, the [] Public Schools will consider certain extraordinary educational experiences to be excused absences. In order for an experience to qualify as an extraordinary educational experience, the opportunity must be educational in nature and must have a learning objective specifically related to the student's coursework or plan of study. It is important to note that not all memorable and/or life experiences are considered extraordinary educational experiences for the purpose of an excused absence. In order to qualify, the experience must be an opportunity not ordinarily available to the student. The experience must be grade and developmentally appropriate and the content of the experience must be highly relevant to the individual student. Whether an experience fits the requirements of an extraordinary educational experience for the purpose of an excused absence is a determination within the discretion of the building principal or his/her designee.

To request consideration of an experience as an extraordinary educational experience, the following form must be filled out, signed by the parent and student, and returned at least five (5) school days in advance of the date of the opportunity. Please note that approval is not assured. Approvals are awarded on a case-by- case basis and are based on a number of factors. An experience approved for one student does not guarantee that it will be approved for others.

Name of Student _____ Today's Date _____

Title of Educational Opportunity

Please describe the learning objective of the educational opportunity and how the objective is linked to the student's coursework or plan of study (you may attach additional sheets):

Date(s) of educational opportunity

Dates and total number of days of planned absence

Signature of Parent _____

Signature of Student _____

For Office Use Only. Received by _____ on _____. Approved? Yes/No By _____.

6/26/16

DRAFT

MODEL FORM

[Board of Education/School Letterhead] SCHOOL ATTENDANCE OPTION FORM (CHILDREN AGE 5 OR 6)

Name of Child: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Address of Child: _____

Name of Parent(s): _____

Address of Parent(s) (if different from child): _____

In accordance with Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-184, the parent or person having control of a child five (5) years of age or older and under age eighteen (18) is required to ensure that such child attends school. Section 10-184 further provides that a parent or person having control of a child age five (5) shall have the option of not sending the child to school until age six (6), and a parent or person having control of a child age six (6) shall have the option of not sending the child to school until age seven (7). A parent or person having control of such child who is seeking to elect this option must appear in person at the school district offices and sign this option form.

I, _____, am the parent or person having control of, _____,
Name of parent or person Name of child
a child who is age five/six (circle appropriate age), and I elect not to send my child to school until the age of six/seven (circle appropriate age). I understand that this option is effective for only one (1) school year. By signing, I understand that, if my child is currently age five (5), and I wish to elect next school year not to send my child to school, I must reappear at the school next year to elect this option. I further understand that, if my child is currently age six (6), I am required by Section 10-184 to send my child to the public school, or demonstrate that the child is "elsewhere receiving equivalent instruction in the studies taught in the public schools," when the child turns seven (7).

Signature: _____ Date: _____

School Personnel Use Only

- ☐ Parent/person in control of child appeared in person and has been provided with information on the educational opportunities in the school system.

**Darien Public Schools
Darien, Connecticut**

POLICY

**Series 5100
Attendance**

Policy 5140

CONTINUITY OF ATTENDANCE

Status as an enrolled student in the Darien Public Schools carries with it an obligation to attend school continuously on all scheduled school days. If a parent voluntarily chooses to send his/her child to specialized training (skiing, skating, equestrian, ballet, acting, etc.) which then prevents the student from attending the normal instructional sessions of any of the Darien Public Schools for significant periods of time (9 or more of the scheduled school days in a marking period), these absences will be considered unexcused absences, and the academic consequences of unexcused absences will be imposed, as outlined in the school handbook. The school principals will oversee the application of this policy. The only other option is for the parent to withdraw the student from Darien Public School enrollment and to make alternate arrangements for the child's education during these periods of time. In these cases, the parent is solely responsible to make other arrangements for the education of the child. When the parent chooses the option to withdraw his/her child from the Darien Public Schools, in no cases will the Darien Public Schools and its staff be responsible further, either directly or indirectly, for the delivery of educational programs and services at sites away from our school buildings. Any parent who chooses to provide education by other means needs to be aware of school policy regarding the acceptance of transferred academic credits.

APPROVED: August 30, 2005

REVISED: June 9, 2009

PERSONNEL ACTION REPORT

February 28, 2017

Item	Name	Action	Replacing/Location/Position	Effective Date		Tenure Area	Certification Class/Step
				From	To		
1	Allison Coupe	Appointment	L. Battista/Hindley/Special Education Paraprofessional	2/23/2017	6/30/2017	NA	NA
Resignations/Retirements							
2	Lisa Battista	Resignation	Hindley/Special Education Paraprofessional		2/22/2017	NA	NA