

**Special Meeting Minutes**  
**Board of Education Advisory Council on Return to School (BEARS)**  
**Stonington Board of Education – Stonington, Connecticut**  
**Stonington High School Commons**  
**176 South Broad Street, Pawcatuck, CT**  
**June 1, 2021**  
**6:00 pm**

The special meeting of the Board of Education Advisory Council on Return to School (BEARS) was called to order at 6:03 p.m. on Tuesday, June 1, 2021 at Stonington High School Commons.

**Members Present:**

Gordon Lord, Board of Education Member, Chair of Advisory Council  
Heidi Simmons, Board of Education Member  
Dr. Van Riley, Superintendent  
Erin Janicek, DMS Parent  
Bruce Yarnall, SHS Teacher/SEA Representative  
AnneFay Sullivan, WVSS Assistant Principal  
Dustin Yaworsky, SHS Parent  
Dan Kelley, Classified/Paraeducator Representative  
**Members Absent:** Dr. Kate Wagner, SMS Parent, Adam Linicus, WVSS Parent

**Approval of Minutes – May 18, 2021:**

**Motion was made by Bruce Yarnall and seconded by Erin Janicek:**

**Motion 1: To approve minutes of May 18, 2021 meeting. All: Aye**

**Proposal for American Recovery Plan (ARP) Funding**

Dr. Riley reviewed the attached list of proposed items that would be funded through the ARP funds. He noted these are positions that will be hired for the upcoming school year. These positions will help students academically and with social and emotional issues. He also reviewed the proposal of ARP funds of \$1,384,000 for infrastructure needs. Dr. Riley prioritized the funding by needs at the high school, middle school and district office. He shared that the ARP plan is due to the state by June 23rd and suggested the council meet on June 16<sup>th</sup> at 6pm at the District Office to review the final plan and will have available all the public comments from the community to share with the council. Dr. Riley noted there will be a Family Advisory Committee meeting on June 8<sup>th</sup> and will open that up to public comment also. On June 10<sup>th</sup> at the Regular Board of Education meeting we will also have an open session for comments regarding the use of funding. There will be a climate survey sent out the week of June 7<sup>th</sup>. Gordon Lord, Chair noted that there will still be a July BEARS meeting as previously scheduled. Erin Janicek asked if there are certain stipulations or conditions that need to be followed to get the funding. Dr. Riley explained the only stipulation is a written response. Heidi Simmons asked if the ESSERII funds can only be used for infrastructure or can they be used for SEL and academic needs if needed. Dr. Riley explained the difference between each type of funding and what they can be used for. Bruce Yarnall asked how the funding will be split among the schools. Dr. Riley will share the breakdown at the next council meeting. Dustin Yaworsky asked if any of the positions were new positions and if there are job descriptions for them. Dr. Riley explained which were new and which are replacements and will share the job descriptions to all council members. Dr. Riley added these positions came identified by the school administrators. Heidi Simmons noted it would be a good idea to send out a public reminder of when the next meetings are. Erin Janicek asked if the district has a sustainable plan for after the 2022-23 school year, for the number of added positions we are adding. Dr. Riley noted that some of these positions might change based on needs and noted this funding will go away. We will be doing on going assessments on the needs of each position. Chair Gordon Lord voiced that as we look at the math scores, this might be an area where we could use the funding for more math interventionists. He asked even knowing we earmarked funding for other expenditures can we use it for these types of positions. Dr. Riley said yes.

Tory Gimple a paraprofessional at the middle school commented to the council regarding the use of technology by paraprofessionals at the middle school. (comment attached) She spoke that the paraprofessionals currently use old chromebooks and voiced these do not always have the full capability that they often need to print and assist students with work. She would like to see some of the funding be used to purchase new laptops for each paraprofessional. Heidi Simmons asked would this mean each paraprofessional would have their own device and how would they be distributed. AnneFay Sullivan commented it would not make sense to have only one device in the classroom since paras travel to other classrooms. Dr. Riley will share this request with the Director of Finance and Director of Technology. Erin Janicek asked how many paras are in the district. Dan Kelly responded about 100 in the district.

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Dan Kelley commented it would be good to have a vaccine clinic at the middle school. Dr. Riley agreed and commented we have opened our doors in the past and stand ready to do that again.

Chair Gordon Lord reminded everyone of the June 16<sup>th</sup> meeting at 6pm at the District Office and asked the council members to spread the word. He asked if the council had items for the next agenda to let him know. He thanked everyone for their part in the council and looks forward to having five days back in school. Erin Janicek ask if there will be more information regarding the June 8<sup>th</sup> Family Advisory Committee meeting. Dr. Riley will send out a message to the council with information on the meeting.

**Adjournment**

**Motion was made by Dan Kelley and seconded by Bruce Yarnall:**

**Motion 2 – To adjourn at 6:44p.m. All: Aye**

**Next Meeting: Wednesday, June 16<sup>th</sup> at 6pm in the District Office Board Room**

Minutes Submitted By: Ana de Oliveira, Board of Ed Recording Secretary

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