

WATERTOWN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

August 17, 2021

The regular meeting of the Watertown City School District's Board of Education was held on August 17, 2021, in the District Office Conference Room at HT Wiley School for the board members and was streamed live for the public to view virtually via a link on the district website. The meeting, conducted by the Board President, Maria Mesires, opened at 4:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members Present: Maria T Mesires, President
Jason B. Harrington, Vice President
Lorie L. Converse
Culley T. Gosier
Suzanne C. Renzi-Falge
Rande S. Richardson
Ammbrose Souza

Officers Present: Patricia B. LaBarr, Superintendent of Schools
Michelle R. Gravelle, District Clerk

Administrators: Stacey J. Eger-Converse, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction
Tina M. Lane, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Student Services
Joshua W. Hartshorne, School Business Administrator

There were 4 visitors.

Agenda Changes: Updated Personnel Report; the board members were provided an updated hard copy to review.

Public Comments: None.

Communications: None.

Board and Staff Reports:

Superintendent of Schools Report—Patricia B. LaBarr

Superintendent LaBarr began her report joined by Dr. Benjamin Rudd, the district's Medical Director. She and Dr. Rudd highlighted the 2021-22 Opening Information.

Masks

Students and staff, regardless of vaccination status, will be required to wear masks at all times when indoors, except when eating. Dr. Rudd reiterated that wearing masks is by the direction of the CDC.

Physical Distancing

Where possible, physical distancing of three feet will be maintained between students, regardless of vaccination status. A physical distance of six feet should be maintained between students and staff members.

Transportation

Students will be required to wear masks when riding the bus. As long as weather permits, bus windows will be lowered a couple of inches to improve air circulation.

Health Screenings

There was no evidence in 2020-2021 that showed that screening students prior to arrival at school resulted in the identification of any positive cases of COVID-19 and the CDC is not recommending screenings or questionnaires at this time. Health screenings will not be required this year, but please continue to do daily temperature checks of your children; if your child is symptomatic or has a fever, please do not send him/her to school.

Contact Tracing/Quarantining

NYS has provided for a contact tracing specialist at each county's department of public health. This person will assist with all contact tracing and quarantining determinations arising from COVID-19 positive cases related to our school environments. Students who are quarantined will need to quarantine for 14 days, as per CDC guidance of August 5, 2021.

Symptomatic Students/Testing

A student who shows symptoms must either stay home (or will be sent home and must remain home) until they have proof of a negative test result. If your child's Health Care Provider (HCP) provides a diagnosis of a known chronic condition with unchanged symptoms, or a confirmed acute illness (examples: laboratory-confirmed influenza, strep-throat) AND COVID-19 is not suspected, then a note signed by their HCP explaining the alternate diagnosis is required before your child will be allowed to return to school. They may return to school according to the usual guidelines for that diagnosis. Note: a signed HCP note documenting unconfirmed acute illnesses, such as viral upper respiratory illness (URI) or viral gastroenteritis, will not suffice.

Instructional Options

All students will return to in-person learning this school year. As difficult a decision as this is, the data shows clearly that our students need to receive in-person instruction. If there is a desire for an alternative option, families may opt to use homeschooling for their children. Please see the [Commissioner's Regulations 100.10 on Home Instruction](#) if you wish to pursue home instruction for your child(ren). For students who have medical needs, please see board policy #8201 [Homebound Instruction](#) (separate from homeschooling).

Instructional Information

For students in Grades 7-12, instructional information will be posted in students' Google Classrooms, serving as a repository of assignments for any student who misses a class/school. For students in K-6, teachers will communicate with families of students who miss school due to quarantine or other circumstances.

Breakfast & Lunches/Eating

Per CDC guidance, schools should maximize physical distance as much as possible when students are moving through the food service line and while eating (especially indoors).

Athletics

On June 15th state officials lifted COVID-19 restrictions impacting youth & recreation sports, which includes interscholastic athletics. The 2021 Fall sports season is scheduled to begin on Monday,

August 23rd. Please note that, per CDC guidelines, if our level of community transmission is at the "High Transmission Red" level, schools should cancel or hold high-risk sports and extracurricular activities virtually to protect in-person learning.

- Superintendent LaBarr continued her report by updating the members on her recent meeting with the WCSD Booster Club. The Booster Club has a request to resume, as it had in the past, charging a small fee at sporting events. The board members agree that different strategies should be used to fundraise, as they were not in favor of charging spectators.
- Mrs. LaBarr then asked the board members for their feedback from the Superintendent Goals that she presented to them on the August 3 meeting. They expressed that they would be interested in more discussion with Pathways to Graduation. The Superintendent will work with Ms. Eger-Converse on providing more information during the September 21 meeting to outline the pathways and at the October 19 meeting the focus will be on sharing the districts key data, which will also include graduation rates.

Assistant Superintendent for Instruction Report—Stacey Eger-Converse

- Ms. Eger-Converse reported that the New Staff Orientation went well today. There were 23 participants in attendance.
- There have been a couple of workshops in the past couple of weeks in order to continue the work in equity. *Creating an Equitable Classroom* workshop, focusing on the first few weeks of school; building relationship strategies while bringing in the academic skills. In addition to that workshop, there was a 1-day book study of the book *No More Culturally Irrelevant Teaching* that served as an introduction to culturally responsive instruction in the classroom.
- There was a Class Link training to staff yesterday. Class link provides single sign-on into web and Windows applications.
- Ms. Eger-Converse is currently working on the federal budget and applications such as the American Rescue plan funding application and the School Improvement Grant application.
- She reports that the district is working on an initial workshop to introduce the concept of *Portrait of a Graduate* to the high school staff. This workshop will encourage conversation about what outcome the district is looking for with graduates and changes that may need to take place at the high school.

Assistant Superintendent for Personnel & Student Services Report—Tina M. Lane

- Ms. Lane reports that last week the high school staff had the opportunity to take part in a Panorama workshop. Panorama is a repository for teachers and administrators to learn about particular students' attendance, behavior and social emotional learning.
- She reports that NY State now has a COVID contract tracer representative that the district would work through with any positive cases that arise in the district. The communication stream will be very similar as it was with Jefferson County Public health previously.
- In closing, Ms. Lane notes that the Personnel office is still working to interview and fill vacant positions in the district.

School Business Manager Report—Joshua Hartshorne

- Mr. Hartshorne reported that the Other Postemployment Benefits (OPEB) report was recently submitted to Bowers Inc., as they are still conducting the audit and this was one of the last remaining pieces to submit. He should have the year-end adjustments by the end of the week.

- Additionally, he reports that the Transparency Report has also been submitted.
- He is currently working with legal representation on Capital Project contracts, which will include King & King Architects and Construction Associates.
- Three bids have been received for surveying for the Capital Project. CT Male Associates Environmental & Civil Engineering was the lowest responsible bidder at \$21,000.

Items for Consent Agenda:

Resolution offered by Jason Harrington.

RESOLVED, that Consent Agenda Items A and B are hereby approved.

- A. Approval of the Minutes of the Committee on Pre-School Education.
- B. Approval of the Minutes of the Committee on Special Education.

Seconded by Lorie Converse and carried; all voting aye.

Items for Board Action:

Resolution offered by Culley Gosier.

WHEREAS, the use and abuse of e-cigarettes and vaping devices has increased dramatically among high school and middle school students in recent years, leading to significant risks of addiction, potentially life threatening respiratory ailments, and other health consequences; and

WHEREAS, the use of e-cigarettes and vaping devices by students has caused the Watertown City School District (the "School District") to incur costs in the form of staff time, disciplinary proceedings, and other costs, with the expectation that these costs will only increase unless and until student use of these devices decreases; and

WHEREAS, the School District's Board of Education (the "Board") has been invited to join a nation-wide lawsuit by school districts against Juul Labs, Inc. the largest seller of e-cigarettes in the United States and other parties responsible for the production, marketing, sale and distribution of e-cigarettes and vaping devices; and

WHEREAS, the Board wishes to join this lawsuit to discourage the proliferation of e-cigarettes, end the marketing of e-cigarettes to children, and seek compensation for harm caused to the District due to e-cigarette use.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Education hereby resolves:

1. To appoint the law firms of Ferrara Fiorenza PC, and the Frantz Law Group, APLC and approve the agreement to provide legal services in connection with pursuing claims for damages against Juul Labs, Inc. and others consistent with the recitals above;
2. To authorize the Superintendent to take all steps necessary for the District to become an active co-plaintiff to pending litigation filed on behalf of school districts Nationwide by the Frantz Law Group against Juul Labs, Inc. and others.

Seconded by Suzanne Renzi-Falge and carried; all voting aye.

Resolution Offered by Suzanne Renzi-Falge.

WHEREAS, the Board of Education of the Watertown City School District (the "Board of Education") has determined that it is in the best interest of the School District to retain an architect/engineer to provide architectural, engineering, project management, and related professional services ("Architectural Services") in connection with its 2021 Capital Improvement Project (the "Project"); and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education has determined that it is in the best interest of the School District to continue its professional relationship with King + King Architects, LLP ("King + King") for the purposes of providing Architectural Services for the Project; and

WHEREAS, the School District's legal counsel, Ferrara Fiorenza, PC and King + King have jointly prepared a contract for Architectural Services for the Project (the "Contract") a copy of which has been shared with the Board;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved as follows:

1. The Board of Education approves the retention of King + King to provide Architectural Services and proceed with the Project in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Contract.
2. The Board of Education hereby authorizes the President of the Board, the Superintendent of Schools, or their designee to enter into the Contract on behalf of the Board of Education and take all actions necessary or convenient to proceed under the Contract in connection with the Project.
3. Upon Board of Education approval, this resolution shall take effect immediately.

Seconded by Ammbrose Souza and carried; all voting aye.

Resolution offered by Jason Harrington.

RESOLVED, that the following educational student trips are hereby approved:

- o Beaver Camp, 8884 Buck Point Road, Lowville, NY; WHS Liberty students will participate in Ropes course, build confidence/team work on 8/26/21.
students-approx. 16
#faculty/parents-2
Time and Place of Departure—WHS, 8 a.m.
Time and Place of Return—WHS, 2 p.m.
Admission Cost Estimate: Grant Funded
District Travel Expense—Grant Funded
- o High Falls Gorge/ Whiteface Mountain, Wilmington, NY; WHS Liberty students end of the year trip on 8/18/21.
#students- approx. 16
#faculty/parents-3
Time and Place of Departure—WHS, 8 a.m.
Time and Place of Return-WHS, 7:30 p.m.
Admission Cost Estimate: Grant Funded
District Travel Expense—Grant Funded

Seconded by Culley Gosier and carried; all voting aye.

Resolution offered by Lorie Converse.

BE IT RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, Patricia B. LaBarr, the Board of Education hereby approves the following:

RETIREMENT

A	Name	Title	Effective Date	Years
1	Rogers, Tina	Library Media Specialist	1/29/2022	21 ½

RESIGNATIONS

B	Name	Title	Effective Date	Years
1	Evans, Angelina	Hall Monitor	8/12/2021	7
2	Racaniello, Kevin	Social Studies Teacher	8/12/2021	0
3	Rawleigh, Shelly	Teaching Assistant	8/13/2021	6
4	Passage, Adam	Custodian	8/31/2021	3
5	Britton, Nadine	Science Teacher	8/17/2021	21

LEAVES OF ABSENCE

C	Name	Title	Effective Date	Ending Date	Reason
1	Dickinson, Carissa	Math Teacher	10/4/2021	11/12/2021	Medical
2	Hayes, Elizabeth	Elementary Teacher	1/9/2022	2/25/2022	Medical
3	Ward, Kathryn	Teacher Aide	9/1/2021	11/30/2021	Personal

APPOINTMENT – PERMANENT

D	Name	Title	Effective Date	Salary
1	Person, Hannah	Sr. Typist	9/1/2021	\$13.80/hr

APPOINTMENTS – PERMANENT – PART TIME

E	Name	Title	Effective Date	Salary
1	Plummer, Nancy	Noon Monitor	9/1/2021	\$12.65/hr
2	Shay, Dagmar	Noon Monitor	9/1/2021	\$12.65/hr
3	Jewett, Pamela	Food Service Worker	9/1/2021	\$12.70/hr
4	Steele, Mary	Noon Monitor	9/1/2021	\$12.65/hr

APPOINTMENTS – PROBATIONARY - INSTRUCTIONAL

F	Name	Title (Tenure Area)	Effective Date	Ending Date	Certification Status	Salary
1	Chynoweth, William	Social Studies Teacher	9/1/2021	6/30/2025	Social Studies 7-12, Initial	\$52,299 (F-1)
2	DeRusso, Jamie	School Counselor	9/1/2021	6/30/2025	School Counselor, Provisional	\$52,458 (F-2)

APPOINTMENTS – SUBSTITUTES – INSTRUCTIONAL

G	Name	Effective Date	Ending Date
1	Barker-Lassiter, Lynise	9/1/2021	6/30/2022
2	Clark-Jacobson, Brook	9/1/2021	6/30/2022
3	Engle, Julie	9/1/2021	6/30/2022
4	Hill, Deborah	9/1/2021	6/30/2022
5	Sanders, Kevin	9/1/2021	6/30/2022
6	Bennett, Judith	9/1/2021	6/30/2022

APPOINTMENTS – SUBSTITUTES – NON-INSTRUCTIONAL

H	Name	Effective Date	Ending Date
1	Bancroft, Patricia	8/18/2021	6/30/2022
2	Duarte, Dante	9/1/2021	6/30/2022
3	Smith, Ashleigh	8/16/2021	6/30/2022
4	Stevens, Matthew	7/1/2021	6/30/2022
5	Gerstenschlager, Elissa	9/1/2021	6/30/2022

Seconded by Rande Richardson and carried; all voting aye.

Resolution offered by Culley Gosier.

RESOLVED, That a rate of \$12.65/hr. for noon monitors is hereby approved.

Seconded by Jason Harrington and carried; all voting aye.

Resolution offered by Suzanne Renzi-Falge.

RESOLVED, That an Agreement By and Between the Superintendent of Schools and the Watertown Cafeteria Employees Association for the period of July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2024, is hereby approved.

Seconded by Ammbrose Souza and carried; all voting aye.

Resolution offered by Jason Harrington.

RESOLVED, that a donation of several school supplies from local community agencies that participated in the Fidelis and Watertown City School District Wellness fair on August 7. Donations of supplies were also received from SeaComm Credit Union and ADK Educational Sorority. The donation of supplies will be divided amongst the schools in the district. This donation is gratefully accepted and approved and will be acknowledged in writing.

Seconded by Lorie Converse and carried; all voting aye.

END OF RESOLUTIONS

Upcoming Dates

President Mesires reviewed upcoming meetings and events with the members.

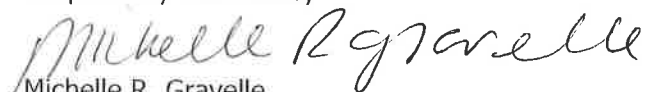
Executive Session

President Mesires asked for a motion to move into Executive Session to discuss the employment of two district employees. At 5:45 p.m. a motion was made by Jason Harrington and seconded by Lorie Converse to move back into Open Session.

Adjournment

At 5:47 p.m. with no further business, President Mesires asked for a motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Suzanne Renzi-Falge and seconded by Rande Richardson and carried; all voting aye.

Respectfully Submitted,



Michelle R. Gravelle
District Clerk