

Board of Education Regular Meeting

August 9, 2021 7:00 PM

Virtual

1. Call to Order

Sean Nugent; Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:01PM. Other Members present: Dan Harris, Charles Raymond, Cindy Luty, and Deborah Burke-Grabarek. Tom Turner and George Carver were excused. Also present: Dr. Roy Seitsinger; Superintendent, and Gloria Homiski; Recording Secretary.

Dr. Nugent explained that the sound system ordered for BOE meetings has been backordered. Therefore meetings will remain virtual until the system arrives and is installed.

Central Office continues to transition from CABA Meeting to Board Book Meeting. That is why the Recording Secretary sent each member a complete packet with all attachments for tonight's meeting. In the near future members can view the documents online.

2. Public Comment

Dr. Nugent read four emails from community members regarding mask wearing in the Fall. Emails are attached to these minutes.

Dr. Nugent called on virtual audience members to participate in public comment.

Kim Tondreau and Calla Thompson asked about the PK wait list. They were told that a PK discussion would follow later on in the meeting.

Magan Gallant asked if information from the emails that were read would be shared. Dr. Nugent stated they would be posted with the minutes.

Kyle Avery believes in freedom of choice with regard to mask wearing. He asked that the board look at the following UTUBE Video: 9knhuu7ba4.

3. Consent Agenda

Accepted as presented.

4. Superintendent's Reports/Updates

Dr. Seitsinger noted that weather is becoming very inconsistent. He reminded everyone that foul weather plans must be in place. He also explained that there are disruptions in food production and delivery. This will definitely affect our school lunch menu. The Board will be negotiating with the Preston's Administrators' Union and the Teachers' EAP Union in 2021-2022.

There is a wait list for PK. Both sections are filled. Grade K also has high enrollment numbers in both classrooms. Mr. Bernier is calling all PK/K families to ensure that their enrollment paperwork is in order.

The number one priority for re-opening schools is social emotional health based on the school survey and focus groups.

a. Masking:

Dr. Seitsinger stated that he respects and appreciates all community member comments. As Superintendent, he must keep the best interest of all students and staff in mind. He has sought direction from legal counsel, the CDC, the DPH, and the CT Dept of Ed. They all strongly recommend wearing masks. Therefore schools will open with everyone wearing masks; in school and on buses. Preston schools will routinely re-evaluate this standing. We will maintain high touch cleaning, 3ft social distancing, and no visitors will be allowed without appointments. All local Superintendents are in agreement and will follow this same plan.

Quarantining: 7-10 days for people within 3 ft of one another for 15 minutes = close contact. Even fully vaccinated people should be tested. No quarantine if no symptoms and fully vaccinated.

The state has agreed to provide voluntary testing for staff and students beginning in mid-September. This will be conducted by a 3rd party. The Board and the Superintendent are culpable if someone becomes sick and we are not following recommended guidelines.

Board discussion followed.

b. ARPA Funding:

The Regional Recovery Steering Committee is placing an emphasis on early childhood education, mental wellness, and housing.

c. Staff Action and Review:

Tom O'Connor, our Food Service Director, planned to resign to pursue another aspect of his career, but is putting his decision on hold due to the food supply chain problem. Dr. Seitsinger admires his decision and support of Preston Schools.

Dr. Seitsinger recommends that the Board hire an additional grade K teacher and also prepares to consider hiring an additional PK teacher.

Mr. Bernier stated that the current Grade K numbers are 20 and 21, with 7 more families still completing residency packets. In grade PK the enrollment numbers are 17 and 17 with 10 additional students on a wait list. A lengthy Board discussion followed. A virtual special BOE meeting was set for Monday, August 16th at 7pm. The Board requested data outlining financial implications of hiring these teachers prior to Monday night.

d. Summer Program:

Chris Pickett; Summer School Coordinator, and Sarah Cahill; Mystic Seaport Director, have formed a great partnership. This year's summer school program has been very successful and enjoyable for students.

e. Flexibilities for Implementing the CT Guidelines for Educator Evaluation: These guidelines will be finalized soon. The topic will be revisited at the September meeting.

f. ARP/ESSER Update:

The following are just some of the items incorporated into this grant application:

- Continuation of summer school for at least 2 more years
- PD for staff
- Administrative tasks

Money to pay para-educators to attend faculty meetings
BCBA training and social emotional health
Science coaching
Prioritizing curriculum areas
Smaller class sizes/outdoor classrooms
Innovative partnerships
Library resources promoting equity and inclusiveness
Archery and other innovative PE materials
Tutoring
Upgrading communication with families; new website
Replace air conditioners as necessary

The grant application requires a letter of support from the BOE. Dr. Nugent drafted one for the Board's review.

Moved, to present the letter of support from the BOE to Dr. Seitsinger for the grant application. Raymond/Harris.Unanimous. Motion Carries.

5. Principal and Special Education Director Reports

Ann Perzan: 22 special education students attended ESY this summer. Ann is undergoing extensive training in new 504 and IEP software. It will assist greatly with data availability.

Dr. Davis-Tomczuk: 20% of staff members have changed at PPMS. The team hired several skilled and competent faculty and staff members.

Ray Bernier: Preparing for social distancing. Will be promoting handwashing, smaller lunch waves in the cafe, etc.

6. Policy Review

Policy 4121 Substitute Teachers (2nd read)

Moved, to accept the revisions incorporated into Policy 4121. Luty/Harris. Unanimous. Motion Carries.

7. Expenditure/Projection Report

John Spang reviewed the summary for the 2020-2021 school year. Approximately 117,000 dollars will be returned to the Town. A few more bills from FY21 must be paid first.

The auditors came in for their pre-audit of 2020-2021.

Paving has begun on the PPMS parking lot.

Mr. Spang shared the memo which outlines the distribution of the 120,000 dollar budget reduction for FY22.

Moved, to approve the recommendations for FY22 budget adjustments as presented. Raymond/Harris. unanimous. Motion Carries.

8. Adjournment

Moved, to adjourn the meeting at 10:10PM. Harris/Luty. Unanimous. Motion Carries.

