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Region 14 Schools

Serving the Towns of Bethlehem and Woodbury

Minutes

Regular Meeting of the Region 14 Board of Education

Tuesday, February 22, 2022; 7:00 p.m.

Flanders Room/Mitchell Elementary School

14 School St, Woodbury, CT 06798

Livestream Option Available

Present:

George Bauer, Board Chairman

Jim Crocker

Carol Ann Brown

Michael Devine

Jonathan Kapstein

Chris Matta

David Butkus

Tikva Rose

Absent:

N/A

Also Present:

Wayne McAllister, Acting Superintendent

Tina Tanguay, Director of Finance and Operations

Presenters:

Wendy Nelson Kauffman, Director of Teaching and Learning

Jennifer Schnitzer, Math and Science Instructional Coach/BES

Donna Marcinek, Director of Student Services

Patricia Paige, Board Recording Clerk

I. Call to Order

George Bauer called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

II. Introductions

Members of the Board introduced themselves

III. Approval of the Minutes

A. Regular Meeting, Tuesday, January 18, 2022

A motion was made by Jim Crocker and seconded by Mike Devine to accept/approve the minutes as presented; George Bauer abstained; the remaining were in favor; motion carried.

IV. Acting Superintendent's Report

A. Math and Reading Screeners Presentation

Mr. McAllister offered a historical look at data collection in the district as a preamble to Ms. Nelson Kauffman's presentation stating that with the 2015/2016 budget, the position of classroom tutor was eliminated in favor of funding an instructional leader's position. The goal was to provide more in-classroom support to teachers. The emphasis on data analysis importance was diminished.

Through Covid grant funding in the 2021/2022 budget, eight interventionists were added in order to provide in-classroom reinforcement. Data analysis has been reemphasized as a measurement tool to plan for progress in both reading and math.

Ms. Wendy Nelson Kauffman, the Director of Teaching and Learning, shared her 2021-2022 Student Performance Powerpoint presentation, as measured by Math and Literacy Universal Screeners' data for students in grades K-8. Ms. Jennifer Schnitzer, the Math and Science Coordinator at Bethlehem Elementary School, contributed to the explanation of the data that was presented. The mid-term report was comprised of the IReady and NWEA diagnostic fall to winter scores. These screeners satisfy the Connecticut State Department of Education requirement to monitor the district's students with state approved programs in order to determine who needs extra help. With the pandemic, instructional time has been lost. An important element of getting the students back on track was the hiring of the interventionists in each of the district's schools. They provide more targeted instruction with students and allow instructional coaches to help teachers and the students who are most in need. The data presented this evening indicates that the district is on the right track. Results show that students are making more learning progress this year compared to the same time last year.

Results will be provided to parents. In analyzing the of the NWEA report, Ms. Schnitzer indicated that parents should be looking at the trend over time and whether or not they are moving closer to the national norm or moving farther away for those students above the national norm.

A question and answered period with the Board followed.

B. Woodbury-Bethlehem Community Music Foundation, Inc. School Grant Application (Informational)

The purpose of the grant is to build the string program for the Region 14 School District and will go toward the purchase of cellos and string basses. The purchase of these instruments will allow for more students to experience learning a string instrument by having the advantage of borrowing a school instrument. The amount of the grant request is \$10,595 and was submitted by Dr. Jason Bouchard, Fine Arts Chairman.

C. Public Educational and Governmental Programming and Education Technology Investment Account Grant Program (PEGPETIA) (Informational)

Dr. Jason Bouchard submitted the application requesting \$125,876 for capital and equipment costs related to producing/procuring programming education technology initiatives with a focus of bringing Wifi to the outdoor spaces at each of the schools and connecting all of the library media centers.

D. Narcan Training

Mr. Jeff McKenna from ASAP attended a recent Safe Schools Committee meeting and shared a plan for Narcan training and supplies in the Region 14 School District. Mr. McAllister intends to bring the topic to the administrators at their meeting tomorrow in order to establish a plan for training in the district.

E. Personnel Report

The Personnel Report for January 2022 consisted of several new hires and resignations; their names were read into the record.

F. Covid Update

The Covid data reflects information from Friday, February 18th at 4:00 p.m. and notes three Covid positive students who attend MES; one student in quarantine who attends MES; no impact from the other schools; district-wide there is a total of four.

Several documents were shared with the Board members from Mr. McAllister over the weekend. The documents originated from the State Department of Public Health and addressed considerations for Boards regarding potential changes to school Covid-19 policies and practices and transitioning to a model of routine respiratory disease prevention and enhanced outbreak management and control for Covid-19 in PreK-12 school settings. Mr. McAllister summarized the information. He also included a history of the state daily test positivity rates.

The state put together a program for Covid-19 self-tests kits and are recommending school districts distribute them to students and staff, two kits each. The district has been allocated 45 cases; bus driver test kits will be available in a separate distribution.

Mr. McAllister's recommendation to that Board is that masks be optional effective Tuesday, March 1st; he stressed that respect be exhibited to those students, staff and families that continue to wear them.

There was some discussion on whether or not other mitigation strategies would be considered for removal, i.e. Plexi glass dividers, etc. The topic will be brought to the administrators for further discussion at their meeting tomorrow, with a letter to parents outlining the specifics provided thereafter.

For future Covid considerations and in order to be flexible with the ever changing laws, regulations and guidance being issued at the federal, state, and local levels, the district has adopted policy that authorizes the Superintendent of Schools to make such modifications, subject to further action by the Board at a subsequently-convened meeting.

Students will still be required to wear masks on school buses with a decision by the Federal Government anticipated by March 18th. The Federal Government can enforce fines on bus companies if they do not comply.

V. Committee Reports

A. Safe Schools

A Safe Schools committee meeting was held on Thursday, February 3rd under the direction of Mr. Devine. Trooper D'elia introduced Sgt. Matt Costella as the new Resident State Trooper of Woodbury. Agenda items included a Law Enforcement/SRO update, body cameras for SRO's, Narcan Training discussions with Mr. McKenna of ASAP, and of importance, the yet to be erected ATT Tower in Bethlehem.

B. Finance

The Finance Committee meeting included discussions on signage at Woodbury Middle School and the high school. A monthly financial update for January 2022 was also provided along with a food services update and discussions on BAN refinancing. The annual audit report was also reviewed.

C. Community Relations

Ms. Carol Ann Brown reported on a number of student athletic achievements and the recent birth of a baby lamb in the Agriscience program. She also highlighted the Grip and Grin project with freshman students and the leukemia Red out Project.

D. Policy Committee

A Policy Committee meeting was held on Wednesday, February 16th. Topics of discussion included Masks, Title IX policies, Field trips, Food Policy, Visitors in School and Report Cards.

E. Adhoc Curriculum Committee

Mr. Kapstein reported that the committee is working on a policy statement.

VI. Board Chair's Comments

Mr. Bauer thanked everyone in the community that reached out to the Board and administration regarding their concerns with Covid 19 policies, current practices and changes. He believes that Covid is still a concerning health issue in the community and mitigation strategies that are in effect now have been in place for a short while, but were put in place during different times. The Superintendent has the responsibility of operational decisions regarding mitigation at the schools.

VII. Privilege of the Floor

Kellyanne and Ray Koemp

In favor of removing masks from their children

Adriana Hackett

Thanked the Board for all that they do; asked that the Board make lacrosse a program at Nonnewaug High school by spring of 2023; more than a club; suggested a co-op be formed like the football program

Alyssa Detmer

Thanked Mr. McAllister for recommending that masks be optional; government has ignored personal liberties; take a stand and put well-being of children first; be respectful of parents; read some words of wisdom from her daughter, who is currently homeschooled.

Kathy Velkey

Clarified her use of the word “cages” at the last meeting to describe the use of plexi glass barriers in classrooms as one that was said to her by a child; asked if it is fair for children to wear masks on school buses; causes anxiety; test kits contain carcinogens; can’t send home with the children; where are they coming from?

Sophie Pape

Having masks optional is a huge blessing to her; did not learn as much last year as she should have; teachers expect so much, not caught up; majority are struggling; hoping to get more time and help to get caught up.

Thea Alfes

Thanked Carol Ann Brown for reporting on the student achievements; stands out as a Board member; amazed we are at the point where the public is thanking the Board for removing masks; against masking on school buses; talked about proper ventilation in school and pexiglass barriers

VIII. Old Business

There was no Old Business

IX. New Business

A. Policy #4110 Title IX Sexual Harassment (Personnel)

B. Policy #5145.52 Title IX Sexual Harassment (Students)

Both policies are a first read; no action; Ms. Marcinek explained that the law changed back in 2020; policy currently in place is outdated and does not align with the current legislation; Ms. Marcinek also explained the different roles within the policy.

C. Covid-19 Protocol Updates

George Bauer made a motion, seconded by Jim Crocker that the Region 14 Board of Education endorse the Covid 19 Operational Updates the Acting Superintendent has specified tonight in accordance with the guidance provided by the State Department of Education and Department of Public Health; all in favor; none opposed; motion carried unanimously.

X. **Other Business**

There was no Other Business

XI. **Adjournment**

A motion was made by Chris Matta and seconded by Jim Crocker to adjourn the meeting at 9:22 p.m.; all in favor; none opposed; motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patricia Paige". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

*Patricia Paige
Board Clerk*

Recorded and filed subject to Board of Education approval by: Patricia Paige, Board Clerk