

Region 14 Schools

Serving the Towns of Bethlehem and Woodbury

Minutes

Regular Meeting of the Region 14 Board of Education

Tuesday, November 16, 2021; 7:00 p.m.

Flanders Room

Mitchell Elementary School

Live Stream Available:

<https://vimeo.com/event/353466>

Present:

Jim Crocker, Presiding Board Member
Michael Devine
David Butkus
Jonathan Kapstein
Tikva Rose
Chris Matta
Carol Ann Brown (*arrived 7:37 p.m.)

Absent:

George Bauer

Also Present:

Wayne McAllister, Acting Superintendent
Tina Tanguay, Director of Finance and Operations

School Administration/Staff Presenting

Edward Belinsky; Director of Agriscience
Eric Birkenberger; Agriscience Teacher and FFA Chapter Advisor

Patricia Paige, Board Recording Clerk

I. Call to Order

Presiding Board Member, Jim Crocker called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited

III. Introductions

Board members and central office staff introduced themselves

IV. Approval of the Minutes

A. Regular Meeting, Monday, November 1, 2021

A motion was made by Dave Butkus and seconded by Jonathan Kapstein to accept/approve the minutes as presented; Jim Crocker abstained; the remainder were in favor; motion carried.

V. Acting Superintendent's Report

A. FFA Officer Team Update

Mr. Belinsky provided an update of the FFA program events. The officer team has a new goal this year; promote the program and educate the public. Student members of the chapter spoke to the many happenings since the start of the new school year, while others were recognized for state and national competition victories.

B. Donation of two violins from WBCMF

Acting Superintendent Wayne McAllister extended a thank you to William Geddes of the WBCMF (Woodbury-Bethlehem Community Foundation, Inc.) for the donation of two violins.

C. Screen and Stay

Ms. Tanguay provided a summary of the state's newly proposed strategy to reduce quarantine away from school, "Screen and Stay". The strategy, which is optional and not required for school districts, would allow students and staff, who are unvaccinated or partially vaccinated, to remain in school after close contact with a Covid-19 case if they met certain conditions. Close contact scenarios not supported by the proposal were outlined. The program offers flexibility from school-to-school within the district as Covid conditions dictate.

D. Covid Update

The latest Covid19 numbers were shared by Mr. McAllister. As of this afternoon at 4:00 p.m. there were 5 students testing positive, 3 staff members testing positive, and 11 students in quarantine, for a total of 19 district wide. This in comparison to 36 overall 2 weeks ago. The district, however, is still experiencing much higher numbers than the surrounding communities.

VI. Committee Reports

Ad hoc Curriculum

Led by Mr. Jonathan Kapstein, the committee had an informal tour of Woodbury Middle School as an information gathering session. Will be meeting at Bethlehem Elementary School next week under the same format.

Public Relations

Carol Ann Brown thanked all those who made the Veterans' Day Ceremony at the high school a successful event.

VII. Board Chair's Comments

Presiding Board member and Vice Chairman Mr. Crocker highlighted some of the positive work that has been achieved in the district and thanked all those who contributed including board members and Region 14 employees. The accomplishments, to name a few, include the high school renovation, BoE newsletter, successful passing of the school budget on first attempt, summer school programs, reinstatement of the transitional learning program, the successful negotiation of union contracts, and the completion of facility repairs across the region.

VIII. Privilege of the Floor

Lou Alba, Woodbury

Expanded on his original FOIA request of October 25th

IX. Old Business

A. Region 14 2022/2023 School District Calendar

Pursuant to the discussions from the last Board meeting, a breakdown of schools that observe the Jewish holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur by closing and districts that open prior to Labor Day was offered for further deliberations. The question was whether or not the adjustments be incorporated into the Region 14 2022/2023 school calendar now under consideration. The information gathered encompassed calendars from neighboring, sending, and Berkshire League communities.

Ms. Rose indicated that there were community members who would like to see those dates observed by closing school in the district as a matter of respect or, at the very minimum, not scheduling school events on those major Jewish holidays. Closing school on those days might be a means of teaching students about their relevance.

A motion was made by Dave Butkus and seconded by Mike Devine to accept/approve the 2022/2023 Region 14 calendar as presented; Tikva Rose opposed; remainder in favor; motion carried.

Mr. Crocker added that the calendar can be revisited at their December 20th meeting provided there is a surge of interest.

B. Board of Education Meeting Dates for 2022

Second and final review. A motion was made by Mike Devine and seconded by Dave Butkus to accept/approve the meeting dates as presented; all in favor; none opposed; motion carried unanimously.

C. COVID-19 Staff Vaccination Policy

Second and final review. A motion was made by Mike Devine and seconded by Jonathan Kapstein to accept/approve the policy as presented; all in favor; none opposed; motion carried unanimously.

D. Enrollment Data

A comparison of official enrollment numbers for October 2020 vs. October 2021, which are verified through the State of Connecticut Public School Information System (PSIS), was offered by Mr. McAllister. The October 1 data is used by the state for funding purposes to the districts. The comparison data depicts 1,601 students enrolled in 2021 vs. 1,589 for 2020 and is representative of outplaced students, students enrolled at Bethlehem and Woodbury schools and in the Agriscience program.

X. **New Business**

There was none

XI. **Other Business**

There was none

XII. **Adjournment**

A motion was made by Tikva Rose and seconded by Mike Devine to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 p.m.; all in favor; none opposed; motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,



*Patricia Paige
Board Clerk*

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