

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of Plymouth Public Schools is to challenge, inspire, and prepare all students for success in an ever-changing and complex world.

PLYMOUTH BOARD OF EDUCATION  
REGULAR MEETING  
TERRYVILLE HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA  
33 NORTH HARWINTON AVENUE  
TERRYVILLE, CT 06786  
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2019

7:00 P.M.

## MINUTES

PLYMOUTH, CT  
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE  
RECEIVED FOR RECORD  
2019 AUG 23 AM 9:27  
*Debra F. Poole*  
TOWN CLERK

Present: Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Kulesa, Mrs. Lucian, Mr. Showers, Mr. Elsaghir, and Mrs. Kremmel

Late Arrival: Mr. Bourbonniere

Absent: Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani and Mr. Foote

Others Present: Dr. Semmel, Superintendent, Mrs. Parsons, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, Ms. Aronheim, Director of Pupil Personnel & Special Education Services, Mr. Hendrickson, Business Manager and Mr. Trudeau, Director of Technology

### 1. **Call to Order & Pledge to the Flag**

Mrs. Johnson called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. The group joined in the Pledge to the Flag.

### 2. **Adoption of the Agenda**

MOTION: To adopt the agenda with the following amendment: Amended to add a final item to #7. New Business: "Year-End Surplus and Sinking Fund Contributions."

Motion Mrs. Kulesa, seconded Mrs. Lucian, any discussion, all in favor, any abstentions, motion passes.

### 3. **Approval of Minutes**

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of June 12, 2019.

Motion Mrs. Kulesa, seconded Mrs. Lucian, any discussion, all in favor, any abstentions motion passes.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of June 19, 2019.

Motion Mrs. Kulesa, seconded Mrs. Lucian, any discussion, all in favor, any abstentions, Mrs. Kremmel abstains, motion passes.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of July 24, 2019. Motion Mrs. Kulesa, seconded Mrs. Lucian any discussion, all in favor, any abstentions, Mrs. Kremmel abstains, motion passes.

4. **Presentation**

- Facilities Study Report – Mr. John Kennedy and Dr. Karen LeDuc – NESDEC

Mr. Kennedy and Dr. LeDuc, Consultants from the New England School Development Council (NESDEC), presented results from findings on “Best Use of Facilities Study” to the Plymouth Board of Education at their regular meeting on August 14, 2019. Five potential options presented to the Board for review were as follows: (NOTE: The possibility of regionalization can only be applied to options 1 and 3).

OPTION 1

Description – Consider reconfiguring elementary school to specific grade span schools, PK-2 and 3 -5.

Grade level alignment: Grades PK-2 at Plymouth Center Elementary School  
Grades 3-4 at Harry S. Fisher Elementary School  
Grades 6-8 at Eli Terry Jr. Middle School  
Grades 9-12 at Terryville High

OPTION 2

Description – Consider closure of an elementary school and reconfigure elementary to PK-3, moving grades 4 and 5 to the Eli Terry Jr. Middle School and Grades 7 and 8 to Terryville High School.

Grade level alignment: Grades PK-3 at Harry S. Fisher Elementary School or PK-3 at Plymouth Center Elementary School  
Grades 4-6 at Eli Terry Jr. Middle School  
Grades 7-12 at Terryville High School

OPTION 3

Description – Consider closure of an elementary school, moving Grades 4 and 5 to Eli Terry Jr. Middle School and Grade 8 to Terryville High School

Grade level alignment: Grades PK-3 at Harry S. Fisher Elementary School or PK-3 at Plymouth Elementary Center School  
Grades 4-7 at Eli Terry Jr. Middle School  
Grades 8-12 at Terryville High School

OPTION 4

Description – Consider closure of Eli Terry Jr. Middle School, moving grades 7-8 to Terryville High School and Grade 6 to the neighborhood elementary School

Grade level alignment: Grades K-6 at Harry S. Fisher Elementary School  
Grades Pk-6 at Plymouth Center Elementary School  
Grades 7-12 at Terryville High School

### OPTION 5

Description – Consider closure of Eli Terry Jr. Middle School, moving grades 7-8 to Terryville High School and grade 6 to the elementary school, consider reconfiguring elementary schools to grade spans PK-2 and 3-6

Grade level alignment: Grades PK-2 at Plymouth Center Elementary School  
Grades 3-6 at Harry S. Fisher Elementary School  
Grades 7-12 at Terryville High School

### OPTION NOT BROUGHT FORWARD

Description – Consider closure of Eli Terry Jr. Middle School, moving grades 6-8 to Terryville High School

Grade level alignment: Grades K-5 at Fisher Elementary School  
Grades PK-5 at Plymouth Center Elementary School  
Grades 6-12 at Terryville High School

### QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Mrs. Kulesa – She feels the biggest challenge facing the community would be in the area of athletics. Is there a minimum age for high school sports? Does a student need to be in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade to play high school sports?

Mr. Kennedy – 8<sup>th</sup> graders are not allowed to play high school sports.

Mrs. Kulesa – So, 8<sup>th</sup> graders cannot be on a JV team.

Mrs. Kremmel – Regarding the elimination of EdAdvance, PreK Programs and Head Start Programs. Could this potentially have any impact on enrollment numbers and did you factor that in?

Dr. LeDuc – The enrollment numbers for those separate PreK programs are not included in your enrollment numbers, Only the district based 3 PreK programs are listed as part of the enrollment. So “no”, it would not.

Mr. Bourbonniere – So, technically, EdAdvance and Head Start would need to find other accommodations, correct?

Dr. LeDuc – That’s correct.

Mrs. Kulesa – Would that be true in all of the options?

Dr. LeDuc – Options 1, 4 and 5, EdAdvance and Head Start are still included.

Mr. Bourbonniere – Is that a cost associated with closing any of these schools?

Mr. Kennedy – The cost would be dependent upon what is going to take place with regards to the closed school A. and B. What would be required in order to accommodate. For example: Reconfiguring classrooms in order to accommodate the students from the school. However, generally speaking, over the course of a lengthy time period, if the operational



costs of a building are eliminated; we have found that typically that provides for a reduction in budget.

Mr. Bourbonniere – We could take some of that cost reduction and upgrade the school that need to be upgraded, i.e. classroom size, etc.

Mr. Kennedy – It can be used for whatever the district determines what is the most important need. There is typically a cost reduction because of obviously, heat, light, etc. All of the utilities that are no longer in use. But, there are also some other issues, for example, if there are maintenance projects that need to be taken care of. It also depends on what takes place with the closed structure.

Mrs. Parsons – When you say the reconfiguration of spaces. For example at Plymouth Center School or Terryville High School where there is currently a vacant classroom, does that mean that the vacant classroom could be the reconfiguration or are you already assuming that we are using that vacant classroom?

Dr. LeDuc – You can reconfigure that vacant classroom in those instances.

Mr. Kennedy – The vacant classroom has been factored into the planned operating capacity of the school. What Dr. LeDuc said is correct. One could take that vacant classroom and configure it into a couple of spaces if they were needed. What some districts have done and which is common, is to take that room and put 2 small groups of instruction spaces and that frees up a full size classroom.

Mr. Bourbonniere – To your point, you could turn around and put up an expandable wall. The expandable wall could turn that large classroom into 2 small classrooms. One would need to look at egress.

Looking at Option 4, the way you would configure the elementary schools, you could change the line to make sure to accommodate the amount of students attending Harry S. Fisher Elementary School or to Plymouth Center School. Then you can get the 10% figure that was mentioned.

Thank you, very informative presentation. This should have occurred 2 years ago.

Mrs. Kulesa – In the event there would be a building project, i.e. apartments, how would you see that changing these outcomes?

Mr. Kennedy – It if were for apartments, we would not see a major change in enrollment. But, this is again, why we strongly advise the 10% capacity cushion.

## 5. Superintendent's Update

- \* Thank you to NESDEC for a great presentation
- \* Welcome Back Board of Education Members to the 2019 – 2020 school year
- \* Staff will be returning on Monday, August 26 and will be attending Convocation to be followed by Professional Development.
- \* Staff will be attending a second Professional Development on Tuesday, August 27, 2019
- \* August 28, 2019, first day of school for students
- \* August 28, 2019, school tours for Board of Education Members beginning at 8:30 a.m. at Eli Terry Jr. Middle School

Mr. Trudeau – (a) Technology Update – the team has done a great job. Upon clearance from the custodial staff, the team will enter the buildings to hook up computer hardware, mimeos, interactive white boards, etc.; (2) emails have been sent to parents with information regarding the current re-registration. Parents may access through PowerSchool with their account. Thus far, there has been very good participation. One option, when re-registering, is to choose Chromebook insurance, if one wishes. One may pay by credit card and the fee is \$25.00; (3) Chromebook distribution for Terryville High School will be on the first three days of school and at Eli Terry Jr. Middle School distribution will be in homeroom; (5) Re-registration forms are available at the high school, if parents want a paper copy. One cannot use the mobile app on an android or iPhone. There is no link for the re-registration. This needs to be done on a computer.

Ms. Aronheim – (1) Update on the sixty students attended the extended school year program and (2) Transition Students (job placement).

Mr. Hendrickson – Facilities Update

- Food Service Director attended a 3-day course sponsored by the State.
- Review of Bus Routes.
- Custodial Staff very busy over the summer with a wide range of capital projects.
- Potholes have been repaired at Terryville High School and at the middle school entryway.
- Harry F. Fisher Elementary School – Tree Trimming by Eversource. During non-school hours, Eversource to install a new transformer to upgrade capacity. This is at no cost to the district.
- Terryville High School sidewalk in its last phase of repair. (Some possible problems in the future such as leakage of water underneath the concrete, which may cause deterioration. However, this would be limited primarily to a section at a time, which will require minimal removal and replacement.
- Terryville High School Secretarial monitors with respect to the entryways have been updated. Cameras have also been slightly tilted so sunlight does not affect the image coming to the secretaries so they are able to more readily identify individuals entering the building.
- Bollards to be mounted in the sidewalks. Posts to be installed at the high school and at the middle and elementary schools there will be planters.
- Harry S. Fisher Elementary School – fencing to be installed. Waiting to hear from “Call before you dig” before work can begin. Forsythia bush to be trimmed on the left hand side down by the Kindergarten playground. A fence to be installed in its place. Work to be done before school.
- Plymouth Center School Roof – Pre-Bid Meeting on Friday, August 16, 2019, handled by Garland, to take place on the roof so potential bidders may view the roof. Work will not be done before school begins. Cost would be more expensive. However, work will be scheduled so it does not interfere with students or the school day. Solar panels will be removed but will not be removed from the roof. There is space on the roof for storage so the panels will not be damaged. The project will be bid out in two phases. One for entire cafeteria roof and the phase for the two alternate spots.



Question: Mr. Bourbonniere – The pothole situation. Is the repair short term?

Answer: Mr. Mazon, Director of Facilities – Temporary Fix

Dr. Semmel: Thank you to Mr. Mazon and his crew for all of their hard work during the Summer.

Mrs. Johnson: She made Mr. Mazon aware of the problem and appreciated all of his help.

6. **Public Comment** (limited to 3-minutes per speaker)

None

7. **New Business**

\* Board of Education and District Goals

MOTION: To approve the Board of Education Goals for 2019 – 2020 school year including the District Goals as presented. Motion Mrs. Kulesa, second Mrs. Lucian, any discussion.

Mr. Elsaghir – Strongly supports the District Goals. However, with respect to District Goal #2 – Social Emotional Learning, he expresses his thoughts and explained his skepticism regarding such standards. The need is obvious and real, however, he is unconvinced that this program of SEL is the way to proceed. He is not completely against SEL because it is and always be an integral part of the classroom. But, he remains concerned about the SEL standards. Upon conclusion of his concerns, the following amendment was proposed.

AMENDMENT: Motion to amend the document to remove Goal #2, Social Emotional Learning from the District Goals. Motion Mr. Elsaghir, seconded Mr. Bourbonniere. discussion

Mrs. Lucian – Do you not support emotional help for the students?

Mr. Elsaghir – I don't under the question. Do I support emotional health? Can you rephrase it?

Mrs. Lucian – This is what the Social Emotion Learning Goal is. It's part of emotional health. Do you not support emotional health for children? It's a yes or no.

Mr. Elsaghir – Honestly do not understand the question of do I not support emotional health.

Mrs. Kulesa – He is saying he supports SEL learning, however, he is in favor of the way it has been presented to teachers having to follow the same guidelines. Am I correct in that Josiah?

Mr. Elsaghir – That is a pretty accurate representation.

Mrs. Kulesa – Is it accurate to say that you maybe would like it to be more organic thing that just happens in the classroom?

Mr. Elsaghir – I think that would be a very accurate way to put it. I'm not saying this is not that either. I'm just skeptical about that because of where it came from. It's another national program. I'm just generally suspicious about this type of thing.

Dr. Semmel – The SEL that we are doing here is not a program. You actually mentioned it too, you said the framework. So you call it a program then you called it a framework later in what you were saying. It is a framework. It is a way of thinking about how to improve these types of skills in students. We are not buying something off the shelf and just telling teachers this is what you need to do. We actually have administrators and teachers all working organically together to talk about how we do this best. We constantly revise the plan. We actually have a district wide committee whose main goal is to continue to talk about this and how to make it better. So we will continue to use the best practices from our teachers and what the administrators and teachers are seeing to improve our processes around this. Just like we do for Math, just like we do for Reading. I don't want people to think this was a canned program that was bought. CASEL is a national framework that talks about building these skills, Ruler is also a framework through Yale that breaks it down into an easy to understand framework. It does have those components of organic in getting information from the teachers. They are the ones working with the students day in and day out. We absolutely want to know what is working and what is not working. We think it is a great goal and we want to continue to develop these skills. We may not be that far off from being in agreement on this. I think it is important to recognize it as a framework and not a canned program.

Mrs. Kulesa – She commends this district for doing exactly what the framework suggests which is starting with adults. You start with adults, you teach the adults, have conversations with the adults about what how it can be implemented about the ideas and the structures. Once the adults have a grasp it is much easier for them to present it in a way that is organic, that is just part of the culture of the school. Not all districts do this.

Mr. Bourbonniere – Fifty, sixty years ago Social Emotional Learning came from mom and dad. We need to talk to the adults. Hopefully, when you do the Social Emotional Learning with these kids, they take that learning experience and then when they become adults and they have kids then they understand where the Social Emotional Learning comes from. For some reason, it got lost in the traffic from one generation to another.

Dr. Semmel – Everyone here and any person truly can continue to develop these skills. It's like any kind of learning. It's a skill that can continually be developed. Some of our parents are in great place and some may need more support. We want to have students come out with these skills. We want to try to build that more in them. Reading and Math will help you get the job. Emotional intelligence will not only help you get the job but keep the job and potentially even be a leader in that field.

Mrs. Kulesa – I know where you are coming from, too. I completely understand what you are saying.

All in favor of the amendment. 5 – No votes; 1 – Yes vote. Amendment fails.

Chair, there being no further discussion on the original motion, all in favor, 5 – Yes votes; 1 – Opposed vote.



Ger, I don't understand. I honestly don't understand that. Can you?

Mr. Bourbonniere – No

Chair – any abstentions, motion has passed.

\* First Read of Regulation 4112.4, 4212.4 – Personnel – Certified & Non-Certified  
(Health Examination – Practice and Procedures)

\* First Read of Policy 5114(c) - Students – Removal/Suspension/Expulsion

Each Board Member was provided copies of the above in their packet.

\*Year-End Surplus and Sinking Fund Contribution

MOTION: That the year-end surplus of \$138,053.24 and the money freed up by unliquidated purchase orders be transferred to the Sinking Fund. Motion Mrs. Kulesa, Seconded Mr. Showers, discussion.

Roll Vote: Mr. Showers, Mr. Bourbonniere, Mr. Elsaghir, Mrs. Kremmel,  
Mrs. Lucian and Mrs. Kulesa all voted in favor of the motion.  
Motion passes unanimously.

Dr. Semmel – New change to law allows Boards of Education to put 2% away in a Sinking Fund. Just something to consider. Right now, the current law was 1% but you can put up to \$240,000 or so. If the Board ever wanted to go back and review the agreement with the Board of Finance because the current agreement indicates 1% it may be something the Board would want to consider. Again, your current agreement reads 1% and current statute allows the Board of put 2%.

Mr. Bourbonniere – We would need to draft a letter from our lawyer.

Mrs. Johnson – Basically, the agreement that she signs with them. If the Boards gives permission she can go to the Board of Finance and ask to redo the agreement and we can write it up but they will need to approve it. She can begin that process. All she would need a consensus.

Mr. Bourbonniere – Suggested a letter be drafted and presented to the Board for review and if agreed upon, present the same to the Board of Finance.

## 8. Board Member/Committee Reports

### A. Finance/Operations - Mrs. Kulesa, Chair

No report. Meeting cancelled due to a lack of a quorum

### B. Student Achievement – Mrs. Lucian, Chair

The next meeting of the Student Achievement Subcommittee will take place on Wednesday, September 11, 2019 at 6 p.m. in the Central Office Conference Room, 27 North Harwinton Avenue, Terryville.



9. **Public Comment** (limited to 3-minutes per speaker)

None

10. **Board Liaison Reports**

Mrs. Johnson/Mrs. Kremmel -- Harry S. Fisher Elementary School

No Report

Mr. Elsaghir -- Plymouth Center School

No Report

Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani -- Eli Terry Jr. Middle School

Absent – No Report

Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani -- Booster Club

Absent – No Report

Mrs. Kulesa -- Terryville High School

September 4, 2019 Meeting Date

Mr. Foote/Mrs. Kremmel -- SEPTA

September 21, 2019 Paint Night Fundraiser to take place at the home of a member. Please check SEPTA Facebook Page for more information.

Mr. Bourbonniere -- CABE

September 10, 2019 Meeting Date

Reminder of the upcoming Convention and Retreat

Mrs. Johnson -- EdAdvance

September 5, 2019 – 6 p.m. Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at the old Main Street School with meeting to follow

11. **Board Comments**

Mr. Elsaghir – Feels that Board needs to assume that each member has good intentions and not make any type of assumption that anyone here is doing anything other than what they assume is the best for the school district of Plymouth and I think we will all get along well as long as we see the best in each other and don't think we have any bad intentions.

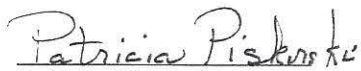
Mrs. Johnson – Welcome back everyone

12. **Next Board Meeting** –The next Regular Meeting of the Plymouth Board of Education is on Wednesday, September 11, 2019 at 7 p.m. in the cafeteria at Terryville High School.

13. **Adjournment**

MOTION: To adjourn at 8:57 p.m. Motion Mrs. Kremmel, seconded Mr. Showers, all in favor, any opposed, any abstentions, motion passes.

Respectfully submitted,



Patricia Piskorski

Recording Secretary

For the Plymouth Board of Education