

STONINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING April 7, 2022-Page | 1

Farouk Rajab, Board Chairman called the regular meeting to order at 6:30p.m. Members present were Heidi Simmons, Secretary, Craig Esposito, Kevin Agnello, Chris Donahue, and Sara Baker. Also present were Ana de Oliveira, Recording Secretary, Dr. Van Riley, Superintendent of Schools, Student Government Representative Kyle Lowry and members of the administration staff.

Late Arrival: Dan Kelley – 6:32 p.m.

Communications & Recognitions

Dr. Riley recognized Larry Shea, band teacher at Stonington Middle School for his recognition from Damon E. Coachman, Director of Bands at Bloomfield High School and co-chair of the Connecticut Music Educators Association for his work as the Equipment Manager for the CT Allstate Music Festival Damon Coachman day. He communicated regarding the recent NSBA conference in which Dr. Riley, Mary Anne Butler and Ravit R. Stein represented Stonington as presenters at the conference. Dr. Riley recognized the paraeducators noting that they will be recognized this week at each school with a cake to celebrate Paraeducator week. He added that the elementary schools celebrated kindness week with various activities. He communicated that Deans Mills will be having a drama production *Legally Blonde The Musical Jr.* on March 25th and 26th. Dr. Riley recognized West Vine Street School which recently did a donation collection for Ukraine and received four truckloads of supplies, food, and other items. Stonington Middle School will also have a drama production on March 26th *Scrapbook Theatre*. Deans Mill will be held a parent night last night and book fair.

Kyle Lowry recognized the high school drama department for their production of *Once Upon a Mattress*.

Kevin Agnello communicated he recently toured Deans Mill School and recognized the three student tour guides. He spoke how knowledgeable the students were about the school, teachers and support staff, which shows there must be a sense of community at Deans Mill School. He also thanked Kim McKee for her involvement in the tour.

Sara Baker welcomed Dr. Riley and Ms. Butler back from the San Diego conference and commended the administration for their work at the conference.

Heidi Simmons recognized the drama students for the *Once Upon A Mattress* production which was so impressive that the audience was in awe, it was phenomenal.

Chris Donahue recognized the Student Government students for organizing wellness week at the high school. He also recognized paraeducators. He communicated that the nurse at West Vine Street School is looking for donations of clothes and shoes. He commended the drama students at Stonington Middle School and Stonington High School for their recent productions and chorus concerts.

Dan Kelley recognized the drama production *Legally Blonde* and *Once Upon a Mattress*, noting they were both very good. He communicated the high school baseball team broke their losing streak and won again tonight. He added the Boosters always looking for volunteers in the concession stand. He recognized food service worker Ms. Vicki McCord who will be retiring, the food service staff are phenomenal, and the personal connection with the students is great. Mr. Kelley had lunch at Deans Mill School with students, they were very informative and it feels great that they are back in the schools. He also added he is glad to see the field trips going on.

Farouk Rajab thanked the staff for everything they do and is so filled with pride. He reported that Stonington crew athlete George Rodgers broke a record for crew team.

Comments from Citizens Regarding Items on the Agenda

Ashley Tewell spoke of the events at the schools, great to hear some of the things that are happening. She is excited to hear of ways the parents can get involved, and ways to have parents involved and have direct connection with administration. She would like to see two way communications. She also asked where the district stands with the opt it out program. She voiced her concern regarding a poster about the new club at the middle school and feels there should be a little more thought put into this. She asked if there could be more information to parents about these new clubs maybe through Parent Square. Would like clear transparency and communication which is really helpful.

Jennifer Evering communicated she is pleased about the trades program at the high school. She is happy to see both job fair and career fair in May and June at the school and will be there to help. The Home Builders Institute will be working with the school also. She thanked all on the Board for their help on this project. She voiced there is a need for an avenue for parents to communicate with administration. She would like to see more direct communication with the Board. Ms. Evering thanked the staff at West Vine Street School for all their work, it is a great school to be a part of. She added there is a need at the middle school for more communication with parents to ease parents' fears on certain issues. She recognized the paras noting they are very vital to a school and hopes the administration can address their needs because we need to take care of our employees.

Consent Agenda

- A. Minutes – March 10, 2022
- B. Checks and Bills – April
- C. Personnel Report
- D. Approval of 2021-22 School Calendar
- E. IDEA Grant

The following motion was made by Sara Baker and seconded by Craig Esposito:

Motion 1: To approve the Consent Agenda A-E

All: Aye

Approval of Revised 2022-23 School Calendar

Heidi Simmons requested to have a discussion regarding Columbus Day and voiced her opinion regarding keeping it as Columbus Day on the calendar. Farouk Rajab, Chair gave a summary of the vote that was taken to change the day to Indigenous People's day at the Board meeting last year. Dan Kelley voiced he feels voting day should be a day off for staff and students because one of the buildings are being used for voting. Dr. Riley reported he contacted Danielle Chesebrough, Selectman requesting that the voting place be changed. However, the change brought forward was to change the voting location to the middle school rather than Deans Mill School.

The following motion was made by Dan Kelley and seconded by Sara-Baker:

Motion 2: To approve the revised 2022-23 school calendar as presented.

Vote:

Heidi Simmons – Abstained	Farouk Rajab - Yes
Sara Baker – Yes	Chris Donahue - Yes
Dan Kelley – Yes	Kevin Agnello - Yes
Craig Esposito – Yes	

Motion: Passes

Second Read/Approval of Grade 7 ELA Curriculum

No discussion regarding curriculum was had.

The following motion was made by Craig Esposito and seconded by Heidi Simmons:

Motion 3: To approve the Grade 7 ELA Curriculum.

All: Aye

First Read of Curriculum

- A. Stonington History
- B. Pottery and Designs

Farouk Rajab, Chair noted this will be back next month for the Board's approval and asked the Board to please take time to evaluate the curriculum. The Board will have an opportunity to ask questions at the next meeting.