

## STONINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING March 10, 2022 - Page | 1

Farouk Rajab, Board Chairman called the regular meeting to order at 6:31p.m. in the Board of Education Meeting Room at the District Office. Members present were Heidi Simmons, Secretary, Craig Esposito, Daniel Kelley, 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.

### Communications & Recognitions

Dr. Riley reminded all about the high school play coming up this weekend *Once Upon A Mattress*. He recognized the maintenance department for installing the old District Office sign in the Board of Education Meeting Room.

Kevin Agnello thanked the Board of Education members for their great work on the superintendent search. He appreciated the opportunity to learn everyone's strengths. He recognized and thanked Elizabeth Osga, noting she was part of the reason the search ran so well and so smoothly. Mr. Agnello also recognized Ana de Oliveira for her assistance in the search interviews and room set up. Sara Baker recognized Kevin Agnello for all his time and commitment to the entire process of the superintendent's search. She also acknowledged the art teachers and students whose work will be represented at the Lagrua Center until April 21<sup>st</sup>. Heidi Simmons recognized how fortunate we are for the creative and confident tools that make this school system work. Chris Donahue recognized Elizabeth Osga for a fantastic job with the search and for Kevin Agnello who also stepped in to help out. Mr. Donahue recognized the boys' basketball team who won the ECC championship. He communicated that Michael and Jenny Evering have been in contact with the guidance department at the high school to set up internships for those students who want to get into the trades. Dan Kelley commended the student section at the boys' basketball game at the Mohegan Sun for their phenomenal behavior and the way they cheered on their team is something to be proud of. Mr. Kelley thanked the elementary principals for their newsletter. He communicated that the Irish Mystic Parade will be on March 27<sup>th</sup> where are students will be marching for the first time since COVID. He acknowledged the VOICE program. He shared that there will be a field trip for students at the high school that will focus on 911. He acknowledged Kyle Lowry, Student Government Representative for his nice monthly report. Mr. Kelly also recognized the boys' indoor track team for winning the State title. He thanked Elizabeth Osga, Kevin Agnello and Ana de Oliveira for their work on the superintendent search. Farouk Rajab recognized all the paras, SPS staff members and community commitment, it has been a long journey, and this is the first meeting without masks. He noted everyone is a part of the process and thanked everyone for their hard work and all they do for the children.

### Announcement of New Superintendent and Contract Approval Effective July 1, 2022

Farouk Rajab, Chairman summarized the superintendent search timeline and process. Chair Rajab announced that Mary Anne Butler has been selected as the new Superintendent of Schools effective July 1, 2022. He shared the following summary and press release of Mrs. Butler's experience. "The Stonington Board of Education announces that Mary Anne Butler has been selected as the next Superintendent of Schools. Ms. Butler has been the Assistant Superintendent of Schools in Stonington since 2017. Ms. Butler emerged from a pool of 24 applicants with her impressive resume of experience, academic credentials, and outstanding interviews. Her vision and commitment to Stonington Public Schools confirmed that the most promising candidate was indeed within the district. She has been credited with leading the development of curriculum that is both pragmatic and innovative, establishing a forward thinking Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiative, and working on policy renewal. With a career in education that has spanned over 25 years she has extensive experience in classroom teaching, curriculum development, and district level administration. In addition, she served within the Connecticut State Department of Education for over six years in a variety of roles including Chief Academic Officer. Ms. Butler is the Chairperson of the NCAA High School Review Committee, a freelance writer for Penguin Random House, a national presenter on science education for the Bureau of Education and Research, and an alumni of the Fulbright Finland Leaders for Global Schools. Locally, she also proudly serves on the Board of Directors for the La Grua Center. She earned her Bachelor's degree in biology at St. Mary's College/Notre Dame, a Juris Doctor degree at Western New England School of Law, and her 6<sup>th</sup> year certificate in Educational Leadership at Central Connecticut State University. Ms. Butler and her husband, John, live in Noank. They have two adult sons."

The following motion was made by Sara Baker and seconded by Chris Donahue:

**Motion 1:** To approve the contract that was presented.

**All: Aye – Motion Passes**

Mary Anne Butler accepted the position of Superintendent and gave a few words of appreciation.

### Board Presentations

Dr. Riley noted March is Board Appreciation Month and presented the Board with thank you cards from the elementary students, and gifts of appreciation from the Leadership Team and Administration.

### Comments from Citizens Regarding Items on the Agenda

Rachel O'Dell commented about the para staff and their important role at Stonington Public Schools. She spoke of the importance of maintaining a level of excellence in the district, and how staff play an important role in this.

Mike Evering commented on his educational and trades path after high school and asked the Board to continue to offer students opportunities in the trades.

Ashley Tewell commented she was very excited to see everyone's faces without masks. She thanked the Board for offering the community the opportunity to be heard. She congratulated Mrs. Butler on her new role. She noted parents are looking for two way communications and want their voices to be heard. She acknowledged and thanked the paras for all they do, they are very much appreciated. She commented on the Grade 7 ELA curriculum and the book list noted in the curriculum. She feels the books must be shared with parents, not should be shared with parents. She would like parents involved in the curriculum and have the communication open and forward with parents.

### Consent Agenda

A. Minutes – February 3, 2022  
February 10, 2022  
February 17, 2022

B. Checks and Bills – February  
C. Personnel Report

The following motion was made by Dan Kelley and seconded by Chris Donahue:

**Motion 2:** To accept the consent agenda as presented

**All: Aye – Motion Passes**

### Second Read/Approval of Curriculum – New Algebra II Textbook

The following motion was made by Chris Donahue and seconded by Craig Esposito:

**Motion 3:** To approve the New Algebra II Textbook

**All: Aye – Motion Passes**

### First Read of Curriculum – Grade 7 ELA

Farouk Rajab, Chair noted this is the first read of the curriculum. This item will come back for a second read next month.

### Policy 5141.8/4118.234 Suspension

Dr. Van Riley asked that the Board suspend both policies related to masks, Policy 5141.8/4118.237.

The following motion was made by Chris Donahue and seconded by Heidi Simmons:

**Motion 4:** To suspend both policies

**All: Aye – Motion Passes**

### Report of the Superintendent of Schools

End of School and Graduation Date – 2021-2022 School Calendar - Dr. Riley explained the updated school calendar, noting there has been two snow days and one COVID-19 related day. He added we are legally required to have 180 days. This now moves the graduation day from Friday, June 17<sup>th</sup> to Tuesday, June 21<sup>st</sup>. A Professional Development day has been added on Wednesday, June 22<sup>nd</sup> for teachers. The state requires the calendar to be set by April 1<sup>st</sup>.

COVID-19 Update - Dr. Riley communicated he appreciated Peter Anderson's work on the bus routes. We have been able to add about 100 more routes since last week. The bus driver shortage is starting to ease and is hopeful that by fall we will be close to where we were with routes. He reported on school percentages of students and staff with regards to wearing masks. Farouk Rajab, Chair had questions regarding the referral program. Dr. Riley shared we have paid one staff member for a referral. Christopher Donahue noted it is good to hear about the mask change at the schools. He asked how close we are to having full bus stops.

**Discussion and Direction to Approve Funding up to \$6,000 based on donation level for the Jerry Desmond Memorial at Stonington High School**

Farouk Rajab, Chair asked for the Board's support to fund up to \$6,000 for the Jerry Desmond Memorial at the high school. He suggested waiting until the end of the month to follow up with Mr. Lewis to see where the committee is with donations and if they have met their goal. The Board discussed and supports this project but would like to wait until April. Craig Esposito and Dan Kelley shared concerns about whether it is appropriate to use tax payer and school funds in this manner and feels there should be a policy. Mr. Kelley communicated that the committee would donate the extra funds that were raised to the Boosters. Heidi Simmons and Chris Donahue both agreed this is a good project but would like to bring it back in April when an amount is set.

**Monthly Reports**

The Board had no comments on the monthly reports.

**Items for Future Agendas**

Kevin Agnello would like to revisit the idea of SBIT, School Base Improvement Teams. Chris Donahue would like to discuss Tech Ed and career paths for students. Farouk Rajab, Chair noted these maybe a conversation for the Teaching Learning committee and then that committee can come to the Board with suggestions.

**Board Comments/Concerns**

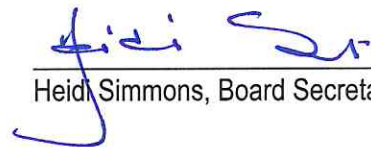
Sara Baker noted the Board has passed the budget onto the Board of Finance and encouraged all to show up at the Board of Finance meetings. Chris Donahue commented bringing some of the trade classes back would allow kids to stay in district. Dr. Riley agreed with Mr. Agnello and Mr. Donahue's ideas and adding these could also be part of the Board's Goals. Farouk Rajab, Chair noted the Board invests a lot of time in the budget process. He communicated the Board will be attending the Board of Finance meeting later tonight to plea their case. Dan Kelley asked what the next steps on the budget process were. Dr. Riley explained the next steps in the budget process and the timeline for the public deliberations. Chair Rajab explained Mary Anne Butler will take on her new role on July 1st. Dr. Osga will help with the transition process between now and July 21st with a transition plan. He added we are in the process of hiring a high school principal and an assistant superintendent. Dr. Riley will be the superintendent until the end of June. Kevin Agnello thanked the principals for the thank you cards from the students, and thanked the administration for the gifts.

**Adjournment**

The following motion was made by Chris Donahue and seconded by Dan Kelley:

**Motion 5:** To adjourn at 7:45pm

**All: Aye – Motion Passes**

  
Heidi Simmons, Board Secretary