

WATERBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES ~ REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, May 21, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.
Virtual Meeting via ZOOM and Teleconference

In an effort to adhere to social distancing guidelines, this meeting was held without normal in-person public access. However, the meeting was broadcasted live on the City of Waterbury's Government Access Channel (Comcast Channel 96, Frontier Channel 6096) and via teleconference (1-712-451-0739/ access code 391507).

PRESENT: President Pagano, Commissioners Brown, Harvey, Orso, Serrano-Adorno, Stango, Sweeney, J. Van Stone, and T. Van Stone.

ABSENT: Commissioner Hernandez.

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent Verna D. Ruffin, Deputy Superintendent Greg Rodríguez, Chief Financial Officer Doreen Biolo, Assistant Superintendent Noreen Buckley, Chief Operating Officer William Clark, Assistant Superintendent Janice Epperson, Interim Director of Personnel Juan Mendoza, Chief Academic Officer Darren Schwartz, and Director of Communications Sujata Wycoff.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES: Ishyra Scott/WAMS.

1. SILENT PRAYER

President Pagano called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. with a moment of silence.

SUPERINTENDENT: In our moment of silence this evening let us remember former members of the Waterbury Public Schools education community who have passed away:

- Louise Ingala – retired school secretary, passed away on April 4, 2020.
- Louis Aucella – math teacher and tutor for many years, passed away on April 7, 2020.
- Yasmin Pena – senior at Waterbury Arts Magnet School, passed away on April 12, 2020.
- David Krill – retired science teacher at Wilby High School, passed away on April 14, 2020.
- Rome Riddick – former substitute teacher, passed away on April 24, 2020.
- Robert Wise – retired chemistry teacher at Crosby High School, passed away on April 26, 2020.
- Claire Martin – former substitute teacher, passed away on May 4, 2020.
- Albano Dias – former crossing guard, passed away on May 8, 2020.
- Robert LaChance – bus driver for the Department of Education, passed away on May 12, 2020.
- Peggy McIntosh – paraprofessional at Crosby High School, passed away on May 19, 2020.

Let us remember and recognize the service, dedication and passion both to the students of Waterbury and those they cared for this evening.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Ishyra Scott led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

3. ROLL CALL

CLERK: Commissioner Brown.

BROWN: Here.

CLERK: Vice President Harvey.

HARVEY: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Hernandez (absent). Commissioner Orso.

ORSO: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Serrano-Adorno.

SERRANO-ADORNO: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Stango.

STANGO: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Sweeney.

SWEENEY: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Jason Van Stone.

J. VAN STONE: Present.

CLERK: Commissioner Tom Van Stone.

T. VAN STONE: Present.

CLERK: President Pagano.

PAGANO: Here.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

Upon a motion by Commissioner Sweeney and duly seconded by Commissioner Harvey, it was voted unanimously to receive and place on file the following communications:

- a) Copy of communication dated March 24, 2020 from Civil Service certifying Rochdi Maghfour for the position of School Business Office Accounting Manager.
- b) Copy of communication dated March 31, 2020 from Civil Service to Angela Rossi regarding acceptance of employment as Lunchroom Aide.
- c) Copy of communications dated April 2, 2020 from Civil Service certifying JoVan Thigpen for the position of Maintainer I and Michael Szantyr for the position of Maintainer II.

- d) Email dated May 1, 2020 from CABE regarding Policy Highlights.
- e) Email dated May 15, 2020 from CABE regarding Policy Highlights.

PAGANO: Discussion? All in favor, opposed. The ayes have it. Thank you very much.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Upon a motion by Commissioner Orso and duly seconded by Commissioner Harvey, it was voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the April 9, 2020 Special Meeting and May 7, 2020 Workshop.

PAGANO: Any discussion, opposition? All in favor, opposed. The ayes have it. Thank you very much.

6. PUBLIC ADDRESSES THE BOARD

(Note – the public was offered the availability to address the Board via teleconference by calling 1-712-451-0739 with access code 391507 between 6:00 and 6:15 p.m.)

PAGANO: All speakers are encouraged to submit prepared written statements to the Commissioners. Comments shall be limited to a maximum of five minutes. There will be no responses this evening to any questions or concerns raised; they will be referred to the Administration for review and response.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Jason Van Stone and duly seconded by Commissioner Harvey, it was voted unanimously to suspend the regular order of business at 6:36 p.m. to allow the public to address the Board.

Denise Gianelli, 108 New Haven Avenue, had the following comments: Good evening to all present. Before I begin to address my concerns to the Waterbury Board of Education and Administration, I would like to state that I speak as a parent of a current fourth grader at Rotella Magnet School in Waterbury.

The Board of Education Equity Policy states “the inclusion of all students and families supports District goals to increase student engagement and academic performance” and that “families are partners with the District in a collaborative effort to address achievement and opportunity gaps”. The achievement gap issue is closely related to the concept of equity – fairness in education, equal access to learning opportunities, and greater equality in educational achievement, attainment, and benefits. The term “achievement gap” refers to any significant and persistent disparity in academic performance or educational attainment between different groups of students. For example, between white students and minorities or between students from higher-income and lower-income households.

Unquestionably, there is a need to measure academic growth in our country. Schools and districts should be held to standards that demonstrate student learning where no factor of identity determines outcomes. Yet, we know that empowering children to achieve academically is the responsibility of adults. The gap has more to do with opportunity than achievement. “Opportunity gap” implies that, when given the resources

and opportunities they deserve, all kids can achieve. Most importantly, it does not place responsibility on kids for systemic injustices. “Opportunity gap” refers to the fact that the arbitrary circumstances in which people are born – such as their race, ethnicity, ZIP code, and socioeconomic status determine their opportunities in life, rather than all people having the chance to achieve to the best of their potential.

Closing the gap is more about supporting and challenging students on a personal level than forcing a stringent, systemic approach. In other words, it’s about enrichment and fueling the desire to learn. We can build on children’s strengths by supporting them and challenging them to excel. Children learn when they have opportunities to learn. When denied those opportunities, they fall behind, and we get the devastating achievement gaps. When students are provided with rich opportunities to learn, they thrive, and the achievement gaps close.

I believe that the District is improving outcomes for children and leveling the playing field between families of different circumstances in various ways. Meals are provided daily with breakfast, snack and lunch. Even dinner is provided on a first come first serve basis. The majority of Waterbury students were loaned Chrome books. Students are also provided packets bi-weekly. The District is offering authentic learning environments that support the development of nontraditional educational outcomes.

During the special Board of Education meeting on April 9, it was mentioned that the grading policy had yet to be addressed but that administration was going to look at options such as Pass with distinction or Pass/Incomplete based on student learning. Then, at the May 7 Board of Education workshop, we learned that the District decided on a fair grading policy of Pass/Incomplete. Loosely defined, a student is considered passing by demonstrating some type of mastery on the topic presented while taking into consideration their unique situation. My concern is with the “do no harm” mentality which assumes that our students don’t have the ability to become high achievers. Solutions should have been solicited and considered from every sector, not just administration. Was the Pass+, Pass, and Incomplete grading metric given consideration? If so what were the arguments against this option? What would be the harm in giving students a distinction in passing? We should be encouraging students who exhibit extra dedication, commitment, and hard work through recognition of their effort as opposed to students who just logs into Google Classroom, does their work, and demonstrate a minimal level of learning. Currently, no distinction is made between students who are fully engaged versus somewhat engaged, respectively. This deprives motivated students of the recognition and accolades they rightfully deserve. Therefore, the “do no harm” mantra backfires, causing more harm than good.

It is my sincere hope that my comments here this evening will incite the Administration to review and revise the proposed grading policy for the Waterbury Public Schools in a manner that will encourage and support students’ engagement and improved academic performance. Thank you for your time.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Jason Van stone and duly seconded by Commissioner Harvey, it was voted unanimously to return to the regular order of business at 6:45 p.m.

7. SUPERINTENDENT’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

SUPERINTENDENT: Thank you Commissioner, I will start in my announcements by first of all sharing with you that there are several announcements and there are several comments to be made tonight and several members of my staff will be joining me. I would like to review with you the order that that will take place so that there's some advance notice about the topics we will touch . . . a lot of information that we will be sharing with the Board this evening.

I first want to start off by welcoming Mr. Mendoza who is on the Board meeting tonight as our Interim Director of Human Capital and of course Ms. Romano, Lisa Romano, who is also our Teacher of the Year for last year who is now going to be serving as an Interim Supervisor for Talent, Management, and Professional Development, and to congratulate Ms. Tomasella who is now going to be the Interim Principal at Reed School. So I'd like to welcome them and thank them for being here or online or in some form present this evening and assuming the roles of leadership within our district.

I will give an overview which will pertain to the end of school, graduation plans, award ceremonies, to be followed by Dr. Rodríguez, our Deputy, who will provide the beginning conversation on distance learning in the district followed by Mr. Schwartz, our Chief Academic Officer, who will give an overview of the teachers' engagement and distance learning video that will be shared with you tonight so you can get an actual glimpse of what's happening inside Google Classroom and videoconferencing. Following that, Mr. Clark is going to give an overview on the computer distribution and the process whereby students can continue to receive computers as well as any retrieval rules that we have now considered for moving forward as we aim to end this school year officially but move into the next. Ms. Wycoff, our Director of Communications, is going to give an overview on our communications and advertising efforts. Ms. Biolo will give an overview on the CARES Act and the funding that will be coming to our district. And Dr. Epperson and Mrs. Buckley, Assistant Superintendents, will give you an overview on how the schools are doing, the frequency of our meetings, and what are some of the topics that are on the immediate decision making with schools followed by my ending the presentation and talking with the Board members about Waterbury Public School's long-term recovery committee and our sub-committees, which, and our long-term committees are held side by side with the Mayor's committee on long-term and short-term recovery of the city. So, it's rather lengthy, we're going to try to be very brief and allow many opportunities and time for questions about what cannot . . . be done in a short period of time but we're going to be very short and . . . I asked my staff to please as soon as an overview is given by one colleague that the other immediately start so that we don't have a lot of in between time other than perhaps questions the Board members may have. If that's okay with you I would like to proceed.

PAGANO: Please proceed.

SUPERINTENDENT: We have been receiving guidance from the Commissioner of Education, Dr. Cardona, as well as listening to and receiving updates from the Governor and also listening to our REC Centers and listening to a lot of research that has been ongoing for the last several weeks. And in addition to that we also have a command station here in Waterbury, we're very attuned to what is happening in terms of safety and safety precautions and protocols, updates from what's happening in our Waterbury

hospitals as well as what's going on with the number of COVID-19 cases in the State of Connecticut and more specifically directly in our community. We've taken a lot of considerations on these fronts as we make decisions for the safety of everyone and as a result of that we've had several meetings, I have had two meetings with students, seniors, that were invited by their school principals participating in discussion of award ceremonies for the graduating class as well as graduation. And principals have had more meetings than that and then we've met continuously with principals to determine some of the next steps that are going to be taken place in Waterbury. Very specifically graduation was a very important priority for all of us and wanted to make the very best decision for the students to have a celebration that would recognize their hard work as well as give them the opportunity to really celebrate with their families being aware that we're in a pandemic and that celebrations look different than celebrations that they were accustomed to and their parents may have been accustomed to in the past. Having conversations with a vendor that can provide a state of the art presentation of the graduates, recognizing each school individually, and making certain that students were going to have that virtual celebration although that's not primarily what they would have chosen first but given the safety and we have moved forward with identifying graduating dates for the senior class of 2020 and those graduation ceremonies will be conducted virtually. Our principals have sent links to the students to upload photos, the student valedictorian as well as the salutatorian as well as other speakers identified by the school will have an opportunity to create and present their speeches in a virtual environment that will be prerecorded as well as having the virtual presentation of every senior that will be graduating in 2020 for each respective schools in their school colors to be presented on June 16 and June 17 respectively. Given the Governor's last executive order and given the guidance that was received from the Commissioner, we have taken matters very seriously to determine the very best opportunity for our students to guarantee a graduation requirement and graduation ceremony not knowing what will happen as a result of some part of the State opening yesterday and not knowing what the full repercussions would be in two weeks or a month from now we wanted to guarantee that the class of 2020 would have a ceremony and the virtual ceremony at this time is guaranteed. So that is what is going to be occurring in terms for the graduation for the class of 2020. Award ceremonies, that was also important to the seniors, that has been worked on with the individual high schools to present an award ceremony . . . to celebrating the class of 2020. Again, in a virtual environment.

We are still working on the end of school procedures for all of our students, some of our middle schools are working on some celebrations, again virtual, for our middle school students as well as we anticipate that we're going to have some celebrations for our elementary schools. And we've noticed a lot of activity on social media, our schools have already been celebrating their students and we expect to see even more of that as we move forward to celebrate the end of school year. I will speak more about the end of the school year as the progress evolves and I will also speak very much to that when I talk about the committees that have been formed to address the long-term plans for reopening the school district at the end of this presentation. And I'd like to turn it over to Dr. Rodriguez at this time.

RODRÍGUEZ: Thank you Dr. Ruffin. Commissioners, Mr. President Pagano, Vice President Harvey, tonight I would like to share with you an update on implementation of Google Classroom and Google Meet and levels of engagement for students. If you have not had an opportunity I would strongly recommend in your at-home time to review

the distance learning resources that are on the Waterbury webpage and particularly the distance learning teacher resource page and that requires you to be logged into your browser using your Waterbury email address. And the reason I say that is because as I peruse several websites across the nation and Connecticut, I do note that there are distance learning . . . posted and most of the time they're in the form of a PDF or one or two web pages. If you take a look at the Waterbury resources that have been provided for both teachers and families there is a robust set of online tutorials that have been created by the Academic Office as well as some department plans for each department content area in the district. So just because it doesn't appear in a PDF document doesn't mean it's not there, it is just, there is so much information that it is overwhelming . . . to tailor their experience as they go into the website. So if you get an opportunity please review those resources, I highly recommend that they're thorough, they're substantial resources, and I couldn't possibly cover all that information tonight.

But I want to remind as we heard tonight that students are still receiving packets on a bi-weekly basis if they do not have access to Google Classroom or a Google Chromebook device. That is an option that we still provide as a district along with the meals but a big majority of our students now have access to a device as well as Google Classroom and then we are very excited that we have enabled Google Meet. Google Meet was something that we wanted to ensure that students were in a safe environment and that they could be moderated by the teacher and it wasn't until recently that Google provided that those meets would be conducted by teachers and not specifically student to student but more teacher in the world of trying to provide virtual office hours, virtual instruction, virtual social emotional learning supports and small group interventions with students. So that Google Meet was launched last week and I want to read a whole bunch of numbers to you and if you need me to provide it I can. Specifically we have now in the district 4,204 Google Classrooms. An example of what a high usage date would look like, on May 18 for example we had 14,709 posts by teachers into Google Classrooms. That means teachers updating students with information in their stream. We also as of May 8 checked in with principals, our Assistant Superintendents Dr. Epperson and Mrs. Buckley asked principals to monitor by grade level and by teacher those student connections, in other words which students were connected in a Google Classroom with a teacher. They gathered that data through the IDTs or the data team meetings with those specific grade level teachers and we were able to capture that data for every campus in the district. So just to give you an idea of what that looks like, WAMS middle school for example has, reports 100% of their students having some time of Google Classroom login with their teacher. And that will vary. Closely behind that are campuses with 99%, 96%. But I want to give you the range. So the range is anywhere from 100% to our Bucks Hill Annex at 56%. We understand that early on pre-k students were not included in the first distribution but that was remedied quickly and I believe right around the second day we started providing those devices but for some reason we don't have as many pre-k families that are logged in but we are proactively making sure that that happens. So the district average if we were to take the range of 100 to 64, on an average we have 86% of students who have logged into and had an interaction in a Google Classroom. And so the medium for that would be 88%. So we're looking at between 86 and 88 percent of all of our students in the district having some type of connection in a Google Classroom with a teacher.

Now Google Meet being very new to the district I want to give you the process kind of how that went over. We met with what we identified as super users for Google Suite

and those were self-identified teachers throughout the district who said they felt comfortable and confident in delivering instruction on the Google platform. We used them as one, a way to gain input on the deployment of Google Meet but secondly to provide the initial deployment plans so they could give us feedback and then we could roll that out. So we met with approximately 85 teachers and had that feedback session as well as professional learning to describe how Google Meet would work in the district. The following day we met with all school principals, assistant principals, the vice principals, and in that meeting we described how that Google Meet would roll out for the district. Within a very, very short time period from when Google made the option available and to when we deployed it, the Academic Office also worked to create learning materials for teachers as well as student guides and parent information on how Google Meet is going to be used. That was again created in a very, very short timeframe. There is a district, as part of that information they provided a districtwide plan . . . interact on the platform, they created guidance on how to prepare teachers for their first Google Meet, gave them practical applications such as how do you meet students, how do you remove students from the Google Meet if the need arises, and then created a videoconferencing guide for students and all that is to say after that training was provided to teachers online, they would then acknowledge that they viewed the orientation, they knew, to use a cliché, the rules of the road, to participate in the Google Meets and then as of May 15 we, having been able to record from May 15 through today May 21 at 3:00 p.m., there have been 22,880 Google Meet interactions with students. So 22,880 student interactions with teachers from May 15 to May 21. We have also over 1,337 teachers who have gone through the orientation module and have acknowledged that they understand how to use Google Meet and how to engage students. We also provide, supervisors have office hours daily where they can provide teachers with support and we know that principals have been working closely to develop schedules where students would be able to interact with teachers on those Google Meets.

So that's Google Classroom and Google Meet and some data to share with you on that. I want to remind us that the last time we met we talked about digital resources specifically StudySync. Waterbury is leading the nation in the usage of StudySync. And when I say StudySync I don't want to assume that we all know what that is so just briefly I will mention that StudySync is a reading and writing program deployed at our middle school level grades where it takes the contemporary and classic literature, it's a rigorous program. If you look at our results at the middle school, our Smarter Balance assessment for last year after one year of implementation, we saw double digit . . . very robust resource and we're glad our students are using it. It also has built in supports for English Language Learners and it gives students the supports to access through explicit vocabulary instruction, give them the language accusation support, and it also gives them the reading comprehension that they need to be successful. And so that's StudySync, we continue to monitor that, we're excited that students continue to use it because we've seen results from that resource implementation.

Just as early as this morning, or as recent as this morning, we also at the elementary and middle schools level, K-8, had some i-Ready data to report and again not to assume that everyone knows what i-Ready is but i-Ready is that online resource that motivates students on their particular personalized pathway, it focuses on both grade level instruction as well as making sure that students have growth in their academic areas of math and reading. They are placed on those pathways based on the

diagnostic that they take. That diagnostic then will allow them to work at their own pace as well as . . . providing them with grade level instruction. So just some data on that, one great thing that we saw in the data is that the number of students that were actually using the i-Ready product closely mirrored the enrollment of the school back at that 88 median percent that I talked about that's also around a percent of students that are participating in the math i-Ready and the reading i-Ready instruction and we're also able to monitor the number of lessons the students can pass per week. So just some highlights here for example at Tinker Elementary 84% of students passed their math lessons last week, 78% passed their reading lesson, with students participating in math at 486 students and 462 students participated in reading. And we have that broken out by campus and that's just the first one on the list, B. W. Tinker, and I won't read all this data to you but this data is available. The most I guess important piece of data to report is that we have many students using these and then we also have what we call the time on task and if we look at the average time on task for students they are participating in math for 108 minutes per week, in math, and 99 minutes in reading. So we're seeing pretty high levels of usage from i-Ready as well which means we have students being supported in Google Classroom but also being supported with additional resources of like StudySync and i-Ready. So that's some great news to be shared with you and to report.

I do also want to highlight that we had some Fine Arts presentations that were delivered to the Department of Ed and then we have also seen some videos uploaded from the PE world for students who are doing PE activities at home. So this is more than just math and reading but it's engaging students to the greatest extent possible during this closure. We also know that we're trying to monitor engagement for students and that that is a, at this time recorded by teachers because we still do have students that are engaged through packets as well as students who are participating in the numbers that I just read to you from Google Classroom and Google Meet. So we are excited that we are at this point in the year and that engagement is at the point that it is with the numbers of students. To have 20,880 student interactions with teachers through videoconferencing just in less than seven days is pretty phenomenal and we expect that that will continue. With that I will stop my presentation and I don't know if you want to ask questions now or wait until the rest of the presentations are done.

PAGANO: Dr. Ruffin, do you want to take questions now or wait until the end?

SUPERINTENDENT: Actually Mr. Schwartz's presentation and he'll give you a visual into what our teachers and our students are saying. I think that's important to hear first.

SCHWARTZ: Okay. Thank you Doctor. I had some data to share, Dr. Rodríguez, you covered everything, so thank you for that. In fact while he was speaking we had four more teachers sign-off on they attended the PD online that we provided and so now we're up to 1,341 teachers that are on Google Meets and ready to go. So it's real time, real time data, we monitor on a consistent basis. I have a video that we were able to put together with the help of some phenomenal teachers. Starting Monday as you know Google Meets was up and running and some teachers were willing to talk about it and we had some sign-offs on some students who were willing to come on and talk about it. So I'd like to play a short video for you now to see what that looks like from a teacher/student perspective for the Board. I'm going to que Dave because he has the video and if he can't do it I got a way to do it.

Video presented.

SCHWARTZ: As you can see very excited teachers, students. I think Dr. Rodríguez's data said it all but you can see the personal touch that's being made. I want to take a second to publically thank John O'Toole, Lisa Romano, Alison Kirchberger, Ashley Feliz, Mallory Curran Brito, Daniel Marcano, Megan Drewry, Paul Singley, and Jillian Goodman for helping to assist us in the very short amount of time. They have so much video that I had to cut it down to five and that was really hard to do and so some of their clips didn't make it in but I could tell you that they were just a few teachers that were selected but there were many more that were willing and able to add on and so there are excited students out there right now and excited teachers so I'm just excited to move on myself to see this development in our distance learning program and that's all I have.

SUPERINTENDENT: Thank you. Ms. Wycoff.

WYCOFF: Good evening Commissioners. I hope that you and your families are well during this very difficult time. I think that with everything we've been going through there's never been more of a need for a very thorough communications, transparent, and sincere and compassionate; I think all of those go hand in hand when reaching our families. And during this time especially we have been very meaningful in what we have been putting out there and we have been communicating often and with purpose and we've been doing that through a variety of ways but mainly our website, social media, and just last week we started a weekly newsletter that's being sent to the schools to distribute and also being posted. And the purpose of that newsletter is to really aggregate and collate the volume of information that we're receiving. Dr. Ruffin suggested for our parents and families and it really seems to be well received giving parents are being inundated with so much as well. So this helps us prioritize what we feel they need to know week by week while keeping them updated with all the guidance we are receiving.

As Dr. Rodríguez has mentioned, the distance learning website has been wonderful and we have linked that to our district website and I am currently working on a similar Google site to put all of the information related to the pandemic and education in one place and I'm hoping to have that ready by June 1. But I think that's really gonna help parents, just a one-stop shop to find what they need especially as we head into summer school and what that might look like and of course the fall. And it's gonna be very important for us to clearly communicate that information in a timely manner as well as in multiple languages.

So I can tell you these last couple of months working with the cabinet and administrators and teachers we've really made an effort to write everything with a great amount of care to ensure that accurate information is reaching our families. It may take a little longer than we'd like and we are working to get things out in a timely manner but it is important to me and I know again to the cabinet to make sure everything we're sharing is factual and that we're not adding to the anxiety but helping to reduce it with good information.

Some exciting news that we have to share is that when I was brought on board one of the goals I know the district had was to amplify our message through television as many of our counterparts do in some of the larger districts so we will be working with Channel 3 to solute our seniors. We thought if there was ever a time to begin that partnership with a news station it is now and we just solidified that this will go forward and we'll be airing a 30 second spot between June 8 and June 24 and it will run 24 times and we're just beginning to work on the messaging but that came together in the last couple of days and all of our five high school principals will be featured in that and that's going to be a really big step I think for the district in opening that world of communication up to elevate us even more. So that is what I had prepared and I just want to end with any suggestions on what I can do better personally, what we can do better as a team to communicate I welcome and I look forward to hearing your thoughts.

SUPERINTENDENT: Thank you. Ms. Biolo.

BIOLO: Thank you Dr. Ruffin. Good evening Commissioners. I just want to give you a quick update on the funding that we are going to be receiving. We were notified last week from Commissioner Cardona's office that through the Federal CARES Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund, that Waterbury will be awarded close to 9.4 million. These funds are here to support our district in a recovery plan to provide education in a way that is accessible, equitable, and meaningful. The State has suggested four priorities to consider when we are developing this recovery plan and those priorities are: 1) to ensure that all our students have access to appropriate technology and connectivity; 2) accessibility to high quality curriculum that addresses the needs of all of our learners including students with disabilities; 3) to address student learning gaps and safely reopening of schools; and 4) to provide social and emotional support for educators and students as they transition back to school.

We are expected to receive our application sometime next week and when we have completed the application and sent it off onto the State they had promised that it should be a quick turnaround time for us to receive the funds. And that's all I have right now for that update. Thank you.

SUPERINTENDENT: Thank you Ms. Biolo. I skipped Mr. Clark. Mr. Clark, are you there?

CLARK: I am Dr. Ruffin. So just quickly to give an update, it's great to see the technology in action . . . us too the technology we much like the other work that was discussed there was a really quick turnaround and essentially an all hands on deck approach to get the devices out to students. Thankfully with the work the technology group, led by Mr. Zhuta, has done over the last few years in putting together the technology plan, updating the technology plan, and presenting that annual plan to the Board, we had a very good sense of the inventory and the type of devices we're using and why and how and were able to then put our hands on those devices and work with the schools to do a quick survey. And thanks to the teachers and the principals for engaging directly with parents and students on that and then working with our partners from the Fire Department, the Police Department, and our facilities team, putting together safe and appropriate sites to distribute the computers. To date we have distributed out into the field almost 8,000 computers – 7,838 at this time. And it's important to note that through our survey that 30% of our student population indicated

that they have a device at home and will be able to connect through the internet with their personal devices. So if you put those two numbers together that's a little more than 70% of our population through the devices we've given them or through their own identification of their devices and internet availability at home that could connect and I think that is what's shown in some of the statistics that Dr. Rodríguez went through and some of the real life demonstration that Mr. Schwartz went through, that these kids are connecting. And I think it's important to see and note that the kids seem better than we are . . . engaging with the technology in some respects and that is an indication of the choices made with the technology and the connection that we're always seeking to improve but the connection that exists between our facilities and technology groups and the curriculum group to get these things in the right hands and functioning. At this time we're still accommodating and working with the schools for any student who needs a device, thanks to some Commissioners for helping us connect with folks who for whatever reason we did not reach through the various means we were utilizing. We have at this time another 1,400 devices on hand and that is the combination of devices that we through our inventory had at various schools and we centralized that so we could do a quick turnaround and push out those devices as needed and we've been purchasing devices with money that's been available through grants and other available resources. So that's another 1,440 that currently as I sit here tonight are available and we've ordered a number of other devices through some grants that should be coming in in the next few days and weeks so we'll add to that total as we continue to work through the technology committee and Dr. Ruffin to move more towards that one to one reality that we want to get to. And we'll have those state computers and laptops coming in over the next few months as well, over 4,000 that will be put into our inventory. Many hands make light work. Again, I want to thank the principals and teachers for making all those personal contacts, our parent liaisons, paraprofessionals who helped in that regard as well as folks at our Welcome Center and so forth but most kudos to the technology group, again led by Mr. Zhuta and his team, who was at every location doing the distribution, finding devices, making sure they were in working order and helping us. And also Tara Battistoni who worked with us on the data and the sharing of the sheets and updating of that as much as in real time as we could to make sure we're getting these devices out and we know who has them.

At this time as we begin our end of the year work we are working with the schools to work with our seniors and any students who know that they might be leaving the district either to attend another school or through other movement that may be happening and we'll be seeking to get those devices back as the year ends and then those devices then could be redeployed over the summer or next year to other students. We need to build a sustainability of this program and this project both for the one to one aspect but also for the ultimate return back to school in some portion so we have to build up some of our infrastructure. That's some of the information you've heard about before in our capital planning and our annual plans that we've put forth, we're basically enhancing those, updating those, leveraging grant dollars and maybe some of this CARES Act money, to put ourselves in that position to be ready when the kids return and also to continue to support the distance learning efforts.

The last point I'll make is that we've also distributed a few hundred computers to staff who have needed the device for connectivity and to do the work that they need to do with their students. So that's another aspect that we continue to monitor. We use our help ticket work order system to address any needs that staff are having to support

them with training and if necessary a device to make sure that they are connecting with the students and performing the work as much as they can in this distance environment. So with that I'll conclude and be happy to take questions when appropriate. Thank you.

SUPERINTENDENT: Ms. Buckley and Dr. Epperson.

BUCKLEY: Good evening Commissioners. Dr. Epperson and I continue to meet every week with the cabinet members and we meet with Dr. Rodríguez and Darren Schwartz, the Chief Academic Officer, to plan for continuous teaching and learning and assist in all efforts of implementing that process. From the beginning of March 12, as you know, our entire world was upside down and in the beginning we were focusing on distributing and assisting with the logistics of food and learning packets one week after another. We then started with the Chromebooks and planning for that distribution. As you know we began with the high schools then the middle schools and the elementary distribution ended on May 8 but students are continuously aware if they need a device they contact the school. Each and every day I am in contact with all of the principals I work with, they text me each and every day how many students have come to the school to collect meals and learning packets and that being said now that all the Chromebooks have been distributed we did develop the spreadsheet that Dr. Rodríguez referred to, the percentage of students that are logging onto Google Classroom. We also monitor the student engagement aspect during IDTs, administrators meet with their teachers and they go by teacher by teacher, student by student, students who are engaged, somewhat engaged, are not engaged, and we track those students in assistance with Jackie Davis, our School Climate Specialist, and we reach out to those families as fast as we can each and every week.

We also continue to work with Center for School Change. I meet with those individuals, Mr. Henry and Mr. Lemons, in a weekly/bi-weekly basis so that work continues to be a priority for us.

We also, this week, Dr. Epperson and myself along with Kathleen Ferrucci and Mr. Balsamo from Wallace Middle School, we interviewed over 200 candidates for the Academic Academy and those students will be selected and that communication will also go out to those teachers. Dr. Epperson can speak more about the work at the middle and high school levels as far as graduation, et cetera. Dr. Epperson, if you want to go ahead.

EPPERSON: Good evening and thank you Dr. Ruffin and the Commissioners, President and Vice President. We also want to commend Mr. Schwartz, the CAO and his department for everything that they have done to make sure that Google Classroom was up and running, the professional development from our Deputy Superintendent Dr. Rodríguez. When we went into this I am so glad that we took our time when we went into it so we could make sure that it was done right the first time and we weren't going back and backtracking. The teachers have embraced it and it's going really well. I know that because the principals have been invited into the classrooms and we have been invited into the classrooms just to see how things are going so we're very pleased with that.

Also from the secondary perspective, we have also been sitting in on some of the leadership team meetings and some of the IDT meetings that the principals have invited

us to be a part of. We're continuously monitoring the engagement of the students, the teachers are doing that and the principals are monitoring that. And again, like Noreen said, they're returning that information to us. We're meeting with our principals, not just on a need to basis but when they need us we're meeting with them also. We're talking to the middle schools about their schedules and the high schools about schedules, trying to make sure we have the courses worked out and everything is smooth, flows a little smoother than it did last year when we roll out of this year and transition into another year. We've just been talking about the importance of making sure kids, that all of our students are getting the extra attention that they need if they were struggling before March 12. And then in the process of all that we've just been assisting Mr. Clark with his department with making sure that all processes and procedures are followed, the guidelines with the CDC when people are entering into the building. And then we worked on the Early College High School interviews with Dr. Rodríguez and Post University and again that was a success. And then after all of that sometimes we, every once in a while we get the opportunity to sit in on some of the Bridge to Success webinars that they offer to the community for free. So we're just trying to make sure that we're available and accessible and we're doing the work just like our principals are doing the work. That's it.

SUPERINTENDENT: Thank you and thank you to my staff and I will conclude and then hopefully we'll have some questions that we can respond to with our committee. The Mayor has his long-term recovery committee from the municipal side and the school board has our long-term recovery committee. We have met, our committee has met twice. The second time that we met we met alongside the Mayor's committee so that we could learn from each other and support each other as we make plans for reopening. We are going to be very much a team in working collectively . . . there are many staff members and many community members on the Mayor's committee . . . so important to our moving forward before we even know the next steps moving forward in terms of safety and transportation efforts, and I'm not talking just transportation from the bus area, I'm talking about just maneuvering and being able to manage a complex reopening whenever that reopening actually occurs. So from the Board of Education long-term recovery committee the members of the team that are present in this Board meeting tonight are all members. On a short-term basis we're looking at what we can reasonably do for summer camps as well as summer school based on the Governor's last executive order it appears, and the Commissioner's order, it appears that summer school would be something that we shouldn't consider until at least July 6. Summer camp might be something we consider a little bit sooner. So look at the long-term plan for how we distribute computers for the distance learning that we believe will be ongoing and we're looking at what, not just what the guidance is stating because there are various committees working on reopening cities, reopening the State, reopening school districts. What these various committees are doing is they're providing some kind of guidance, they're providing some suggestions, they're providing ideas, but they're not going to tell Waterbury what Waterbury needs to do or any of the other school districts. School districts need to own what that's going to look like for them. And that's what this committee, our committee will be looking at from the suggestions that are presented to the ones that we learn on our own – what would be best for Waterbury moving forward. So it's a monumental task that will not be quick to make recommendations on. We want to take our time and we want to be very thorough and be inclusive. Because we want to be inclusive the committee will also, our committee will expand to three sub-committees. We will have one which currently meets, the technology committee, and I believe I sent

members of that committee to the Board members. We'll also have teaching and learning committee, which again will have various other members from our community, not only school administrators. And then the proposed health and safety committee members again that will expand not only our committee within our school system but also other members of the City who also provide additional guidance to us such as StayWell, Wellmore, the Health Department, Parks Department, the Police Department, PAL representation, and the Fire and the Hazmat rep. So we're expecting that this work, while it's going to be very intense, it's going to be inclusive of parents and students as well because we want to include student voice in our committees as well as parents. We've had a number of parent liaisons volunteer. And so while everybody cannot sit on every single committee we do expect that our committees will be inclusive and then we're going to have many variations of a proposed plan before we ever get to a plan that we want to present to the Board for approval.

I'm gonna stop there, that's a lot of information, and believe me that's only a portion of what this team has been doing every single day, they work extremely hard. I'm proud of the principals for doing . . . great job and for the parents and the students for the willingness to travel along with us during this time. I'm very pleased with our food and nutrition staff, for our maintainers, for everyone who is out on the frontline every day or sometimes a couple of days a week, almost someone is constantly working on ensuring that we have a strong team on the ground and when team members have been ill, because that has happened, other team members have stepped forward to continue that work whether it's preparing meals for the students, issuing packets, being there to respond to an issue that . . . response at the school level from our various office staff members who are taking calls remotely, who are responding to emails, I cannot thank everyone enough because in this situation that we're in people have really risen to being true heroes in providing what's best for children. Not always popular decisions that have to be made but always with the best interest of the people involved. And with that I will conclude this presentation and we are ready for any questions that you might have.

PAGANO: Any questions anyone? Commissioner Serrano-Adorno.

SERRANO-ADORNO: You guys pretty much answered a lot of the questions, that was a lot of information so as I was writing questions you guys were answering them so I appreciate every single one of you guys. Dr. Rodríguez, I know you mentioned as far as the Google Meet or the Google Classroom you were also gonna include PE and that was actually one of my questions. I did attend a virtual ZOOM event from Bridge to Success on May 13 – Mind over Matter, and they actually had Fitness Fury do a little fitness demonstration and I thought that is very important to try to keep the mind and body active and engage our students and families physically. You know I myself I've been maintaining to do, you guys already know I do Zumba so I've been doing that live and just kind of keep that energy going. So not just the academics but I think the physical activity part so I love that idea that you definitely can have maybe gym teachers or someone to help with deep breathing and how to release some stress. So that was definitely something that I do appreciate you guys are doing. That was a comment.

Dr. Ruffin, as far as the distance learning, how is the special ed student, is there a plan in place, I know it's hard because it's individualized and I know it's probably per each IEP, but is there something moving forward or a plan to help those students?

SUPERINTENDENT: Absolutely Commissioner and thanks for asking the question. There is some ongoing teaching and learning going on for our special needs students and it is definitely individualized and it's specialized, and that is ongoing. There are still some challenges depending on the IEP but we are definitely connecting with our special need students and some of the specialized assistance is also being provided as well.

SERRANO-ADORNO: Awesome. Thank you. Kudos and applause to all of you guys, you're doing amazing work. Thank you.

PAGANO: Commissioner Jason Van Stone.

J. VAN STONE: Thank you Mr. President. Everyone, thank you for a very thorough presentation, I think it touched on a lot of things so I appreciate all the work you guys put in there. Even though it was encompassing it was a bit of an executive summary, kind of highlights of certain things going on. I was wondering if we'd be able to get some of the documents you guys were referencing you know just sent out in an email so we can get kind of a full scope. Everything we heard today was terrific but if we could have some of those origin documents where we could take a look to see how things are going, a little more granule look, that would also be appreciated.

SUPERINTENDENT: Absolutely Commissioner. We'll compile it in like one big document with subheadings so that you can get it.

J. VAN STONE: I appreciate that. Thank you Mr. President.

PAGANO: Commissioner Tom Van Stone, you're next

T. VAN STONE: Thank you Mr. President, through you. Dr. Ruffin, over the last few years Darrel (Darren) Schwartz and his team has brought a lot of new curriculum to the Board, most of it, if not all of it, was very media driven – resources, et cetera. So what has done, has that complimented our distance learning to this point?

SUPERINTENDENT: It absolutely has and I'm going to let Mr. Schwartz speak more to that. But I mean it was almost like it was right in time because the materials that Mr. Schwartz and his team brought to Board and then the Board and the Curriculum Committee approved, all have digital resources and now it's thrown us into a world where gosh, how timely is that. But Mr. Schwartz can elaborate.

SCHWARTZ: I think that was my other brother Darrel that did that. So Commissioner Van Stone, good point, I think that you know as you sit there and chair the Curriculum Committee you know that many of the things that we bring to you have a media component to it and we've had a keen eye and have given rubric weight to those programs and curriculums that provide that online resource for students and now more than ever man are we lucky that we've had, I thank our Interim Superintendent Mr. Henry who helped get the ball rolling with some of the curriculum purchases and with Dr. Ruffin who really came in and saw a big need there and supported the academic

office in reallocating current funding, not new money, but current funding and reallocated it towards what's important for students which is curriculum and online components to that. And so we've had to adjust a little bit obviously in this new environment and we continue to do so but we are, Dr. Ruffin hit it on the head, it's right in time for a lot of our departments to have such robust online programming and so I want to thank the Board for passing those curriculums and I think that's what made those numbers that you saw earlier, it was a lot in many ways a smooth transition over for some of our students with those programs.

T. VAN STONE: Thank you Mr. President, just one last comment. That video you showed us, taking a peak in the classroom, that was fantastic, that made my day, so thanks.

PAGANO: Okay, any other questions? Vice President Harvey.

HARVEY: Thank you very much for those presentations, a lot of information so you may receive questions afterwards but what stands out for me, Will, I'm gonna direct this question to you, when you talk about the computers, how many computers do we need at this present time so that all students have computers?

CLARK: Well if you look at the numbers that we presented, if you take out the students who essentially have computers and are able to handle the connectivity themselves, it's essentially you need another 10,000 cause if you look around 8,000 are out in the field, we have another 1,000/1,500 that we have in stock, so you know that gets you around 9/10,000 and if you think about our student population of 19,000. But again, you have to remember that there could be some elements of bring your own device and so forth. We are getting that State infusion of laptops over 4,000, so that number starts to come down a little bit but if you think about just the core need if you don't assume any bring your own device or folks utilizing their own that's essentially the number, we're around 9/10,000 in hand right now. If you add in that State component that's coming in for the high schools it gets us to about 14,000 so somewhere in between that five and ten thousand is where the need is.

HARVEY: Okay and the reason why I'm asking this question Will is because I have been asked this question by community leaders who want to assist us with providing these computers to our students. So I think we need to, I know you said, you mentioned we're waiting for the State, you're waiting for other funds from other areas, computers from other areas, we have community people that are willing to contribute to this cause. So that's why I'm asking do we have a handle on what the figures are. So I'm just gonna leave that with you. If we can work out, I'm not sure of the legalities and all this other stuff but we have community organizations and community leaders that want to contribute to this cause because they want students to have computers. So I'll leave that with you and pursue that with you later.

I have two more questions. Mr. Rodríguez I thank you so much for those stats. I've been asking how are we measuring engagement, how many log-ins, et cetera. Jason, I think you asked the question, and if we can keep that data coming, maybe on a monthly basis or a weekly basis, whatever the case may be because that's important data to have in order to measure engagement. So I thank you so much for providing that information.

Now, in the paper, I believe it was on Monday, I'm looking at my countertop here, it talked about figures that were released in regards to our grammar school, high school, and middle school in regards to those that I believe have been contacted, 91.3% for elementary students, 74.8 for middle grade students, and 66.2. So here's my question, we say that we make the effort and I believe that we are doing that and this, Dr. Ruffin, this question is directed to you, how, or anyone actually, how, what are we doing after we reach out, we receive no response, what is the next step for engagement, what is the next step to reach these families?

SUPERINTENDENT: We're utilizing all of our staff that are there for the purpose of supporting families, finding families, reaching out trying to make some last minute connections. We're reaching out to the current students that might know where the students are and obtaining information and documenting that. We're also utilizing some of the assistance from some of the community members that are assisting us by reaching out if perhaps there is a language barrier. We are also meeting and have received the support of our SROs who are not going to help us because they want to arrest students or anything but they're doing that because they have a relationship with students that might be able to help us. We've had conversations and meetings with those that may be able to indicate to us whether the students are in some kind of trouble or in distress. We're also looking to see and examining some of the homeless stats that we have and really identifying students by name to help other people assist us with doing that. We have staff that's available for that specific purpose. And additionally after we've exhausted all of our resources and we can no longer find anyone and we've exhausted all of our resources, at this time there's nothing else that we will be able to do.

HARVEY: So right now have we made a dent with the figures or are we pretty much you know, the figures have they stayed the same or have you made any improvement?

SUPERINTENDENT: There's improvements that are being made almost on a daily basis that will not be updated and provided for public consumption every single day but we're making some progress, schools are celebrating when they may even find one. And keeping in mind that even when the student is located there are many, many scenarios that we know of where they may not have the, it may not be in their best interest to connect electronically if there's a situation of trauma and we are very sensitive to that on every level.

HARVEY: Okay, thank you. And you brought up trauma, urban trauma, and I hope that we have a way of, I remember sending an email because I listened to a webinar on urban trauma so I hope that we have some plans, professional development, we may have done it before but I think we need to do it again on urban trauma because we, hopefully when we begin to rev up for the fall, if that's the date or that's the time, we will need to deal with that issue. So I thank you very much. Great job.

PAGANO: Liz Brown, did I see your hand up?

BROWN: I just have a quick question in terms of, I didn't hear any mention about PPE, what we're envisioning what the schools might need or is that still in the planning stages?

SUPERINTENDENT: That's part of what we're gonna include as we consider some of our options and what are some of the options for what school might look like whenever schools do open up again. Including summer schools.

BROWN: One thing that I know CAFE is working on encouraging the State to do some bulk purchasing and kind of look at it holistically that if every school vying for these supplies themselves may be . . . so that's one thing that they are looking at. I don't know if it's going to happen but, I don't know if you've heard anything.

SUPERINTENDENT: We hear so much and we receive so much so if you just kind of just stop for a little while you're gonna receive something else and so Mr. Clark and his team in operations are very much aware of those kinds of things as well as the Emergency Command Station that is here in Waterbury as well as the Mayor's committee that we meet with every week. We are very much aware that that is something that is on that list of "so what are we gonna do when".

BROWN: Okay, thank you. Great job everyone. The presentations were awesome.

PAGANO: Commissioner Rocco Orso.

ORSO: First of all I want to thank you very much for your presentations and commend you on all your hard work. Dr. Ruffin, one quick question, you talk about the graduations and the virtual graduations, are they going to be like a ZOOM type of thing? We as Commissioners could we be present at them, I mean ZOOM in on these graduation ceremonies?

SUPERINTENDENT: Absolutely. After they are done in rough draft the principals will have the opportunity to review them for any type of editing and then once they're ready to be posted an announcement will go out to family, community, to everyone, and then they will be posted so that everybody could like congregate in one area, families can do that and then we will have three graduations per day. So we'll have three graduations on the 16th and three graduations on the 17th and we can all sit there and watch them in the safety and security of wherever we choose to be. And then they're going to be preserved for reviewing many more times after that. Kind of like a YouTube posting or something like that after we get to see them on the night of their graduation.

ORSO: Thank you.

PAGANO: Thank you Dr. Ruffin and team that was wonderful. I'll move onto the next Agenda item which happens to be me. Ishyra, you have any comments?

ISHYRA SCOTT: Yes, to Dr. Ruffin, about graduation. I was speaking to a lot of my classmates regarding graduation because a lot of them are saying the virtual graduation, a lot of us don't want the virtual graduation because we feel like it wasn't, we don't get the sense of like a real graduation and we don't have like any caps and gowns so I feel like a lot of them wanted caps and gowns and those types of things and some of the suggestions I saw in the group chats were like drive-through graduations because we see like other states doing them. Or I think there was like one with a field and they had all the students separated from six feet apart so they weren't close to each

other on a field, I don't know how that would actually be possible for us but even if like after the virtual graduation like we had a different type of graduation ceremony for our class of 2020. I don't know how that would work for us but I know that was some of the suggestions that came up.

SUPERINTENDENT: I want to thank you for bringing that up and I will be more than happy to respond to why we're going to have the virtual graduation and why I did not make the decision to recommend that we would have a drive-by graduation or something else that might occur at an undetermined date. First of all I wanted to ensure that even though it was not what everyone thought that they would be experiencing in the class of 2020, that the class of 2020 had a celebration. I wanted to ensure that, the high school principals wanted to ensure that, and even on a select basis of students that did join the conversation as the invitations were sent out by their principals, even at that time we considered several options. Can we have graduation in July or in August or can we have a different kind of graduation? We don't want a graduation virtually or we don't want a graduation that's going to take away from us walking on stage with our cap and gown. I get it, I totally get that. But, we had to make a decision, I did, very quickly, not to hurry and make a decision but to ensure that my senior class of 2020 was gonna get something. So let me give you a scenario, if we do not have a virtual graduation, first of all virtual graduations are not created in a week so a decision had to be made in a timely manner to at least allow us to push forward with this is a graduation ceremony that we can guarantee to our class of 2020. That's what we did, a virtual graduation. I think the links went out, I know different schools had different preparations for their class because school did end on March 12 and so some had more pictures than others, we had the opportunity for students to upload a photo and to be able to create a graduation that we can guarantee can happen in June knowing that the last day of school is June 17. So going a little bit ahead, there are some school districts that may very well have some drive-by graduations and while I cannot speak for all of the different . . . make that decision. What we all knew in Connecticut that we received guidance that we were not to have gatherings of more than five people in any one place and that did not change with this last executive order. And it might change on June 20 to expand for phase two or phase three of the Governor's plan to open the State, it might very well do that. It could however go back the other way and say because we opened up at the time that we did we're going to have to shut down some areas and we're going to go back into more of a quarantine. That could happen. I don't know that it will but I did not want our senior class of 2020 jeopardized because things could change in a manner of 14 days. And I wanted a guarantee that the class would have a graduation. There is not a feasible way with the number of high schools that we have in Waterbury to guarantee the safety of our students and our staff and everyone else if we do a drive-by graduation. Some districts that have one high school might be in a different position than we are, we don't have one high school. And so, and I'm very pleased that we have the number of high schools and the number of students that we have but we couldn't gamble on that and deny the senior class the opportunity to at least graduate. I know that it's not a popular decision and I know that you're not very pleased with the fact that we're gonna have a virtual graduation but had I not had graduation on June 16 and 17 in a virtual format and we were trying to schedule graduation in July under the assumption that the order was going to be lifted, I want you to know that that was not the way the Governor planned on releasing the next phase of his plan. It's currently no more than five for large gatherings. The next phase could presumably expand to no more than 10, or 50 maybe, that's still smaller than any of our

graduating classes in Waterbury. So given all of that we can either have a virtual graduation which is guaranteed or we can have a graduation that could be moved potentially but it may not occur at all. And so as Superintendent and faced with those options that was the best option to guarantee that the class of 2020 was gonna get celebrated.

SCOTT: Okay, thank you, I just wanted to get a clear explanation just so I can go back to the class and be like this is the reason for why we're having a virtual graduation so I appreciate you explaining that to me.

SUPERINTENDENT: Thank you and if you want me to jump on a call with all of you one more time so you can just tell me how unhappy you are, if that makes you happy, I'll do that.

SCOTT: Okay, thank you.

SUPERINTENDENT: You're welcome.

8. PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

PAGANO: Thank you, it's now the President's corner. I have a couple of comments. You know I actually look at these times as similar to sailing a boat. I used to sail a lot when I was younger. Sometimes you have to jibe and sometimes you have to tack, that's steering the boat according to the winds for you land lovers. But everything else you have to keep your eye on the mark, the target that you're trying to go towards. My personal feelings about the department during this chaotic storm is positive. I realize that some probably disagree with me and that's okay but as I learned at my previous job where I had a little more than 1,500 individuals, I learned the fine art of appreciative inquiry, that's celebrating the things that we were good at cause heaven knows we did a lot more screw ups during the day than most people saw at home on their TV screen. There is enough negative energy with this pandemic so I jibe and tack my personal sailboat toward positive energy marks. Dr. Ruffin and team, you guys are doing a fantastic effort on keeping this chaos at bay. No one has had the experiential education that all of you have been through in these past two months. To each and every teacher in our district and principal and vice principal, I compliment you for your stellar performance. It is not a perfect world and I totally get it, that stands . . . there will be mistakes, there will be screw-ups, there will be stressors that will make your day more stressful. But at the end of the day the teaching and delivery of the care and love that you have for our students is being received and acknowledged. I applaud each and every one of you. I thank you for your service and thanks for your professionalism.

That's the end of the President's Comments. Student Comments. Ishyra, do you have any other comments.

9. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES' COMMENTS

SCOTT: No, I'm good now.

PAGANO: Does anyone have an item to be removed from the Consent Calendar?

President Pagano proceeded to read the Consent Calendar, items 10.1 through 10.3.

10. CONSENT CALENDAR

Upon a motion by Commissioner Serrano-Adorno and duly seconded by Commissioner Sweeney, it was voted unanimously to approve the Consent Calendar, items 10.1 through 10.3, as listed:

- 10.1 The Committee on Finance recommends the Waterbury Board of Education approve a Professional Services Agreement with Stanley Convergent Security Solutions, Inc., for a three year period and in the not to exceed amount of \$267,444.88, to provide monitoring and services of school security systems.
- 10.2 The Committee on Finance recommends the Waterbury Board of Education approve a Professional Services Agreement with Facility Support Services, LLC, for a three year period and in the amount not to exceed \$46,425.00, to provide on-call environmental services and AHERA (Asbestos Hazardous Emergency Response Act) inspections.
- 10.3 The Committee on Building & School Facilities recommends the Waterbury Board of Education approve the Educational Specifications, as attached, for the proposed Generali School Roof Project.

PAGANO: All in favor? Anybody have discussion? All in favor, opposed. Thank you. Motion carries.

11. ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT

There were no items removed from the Consent Calendar.

12. COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

- 12.1 **Upon a motion by Commissioner Harvey and duly seconded by Commissioner Jason Van Stone, it was voted unanimously to approve that the request of Mayor Neil M. O'Leary to name the Crosby High School gymnasium in honor of Nicholas (Nick) Augelli be approved.**

PAGANO: Discussion?

HARVEY: I just first of all want to say that this is indeed an honor as a Crosby-ite and as a Crosby Bulldog to make that motion. And the honor, you know as a Crosby-ite, it is an honor to have Nick have his gym named after, the gym named after him. So I wholeheartedly support this. I congratulate him for all his accomplishments and it makes us proud those of us not only in the City but those of us who graduated from Crosby High School and attended Crosby High School. So thank you.

PAGANO: Any others? Commissioner Rocco Orso.

ORSO: I just again wanted to congratulate Nick. It's a great honor. It's an honor and a privilege for me to vote yes for this tonight and it's well deserved, well deserved. Thank you Nick, thanks for all your good work.

PAGANO: All in favor of this approval, opposed. Motion carries. Congratulations Mr. Augelli.

13. COMMITTEE ON POLICY & LEGISLATION

Item #13.1

PAGANO: I'm looking for a motion to approve the addition of the following paragraph to policy 6146.1, High School Grading/QPR; policy 6146.11, Elementary School Uniform Grading; and policy 6146.111, Middle School Uniform Grading:

In the event that schools are unexpectedly closed under a municipal, state or federal mandate for ten (10) or more consecutive school days, the Superintendent will provide equitable grading procedures in the best interest of all students that account for such a closure and communicate the changes in procedures. In the event of such a closure, the Superintendent's grading procedures will supersede the following formulas and grading policies. These procedures will remain in effect, by decision of the Superintendent, until such time the Superintendent deems appropriate.

SWEENEY: **So moved.**

SERRANO-ADORNO: **Second.**

J. VAN STONE: Mr. President, **I make a motion to amend** to change the language slightly. My changes will be in the first and the last sentence so I'll read it slowly so it's not too confusing. "In the event that schools are unexpectedly closed under a municipal, state or federal mandate for ten (10) or more consecutive school days, and with the approval of the Board of Education, the Superintendent will provide equitable grading procedures in the best interest of all students that account for such a closure and communicate the changes in procedures. In the event of such a closure, the Superintendent's grading procedures will supersede the following formulas and grading policies. These procedures will remain in effect, by decision of the Superintendent and the Board of Education, until a time deemed appropriate." **So moved.**

HARVEY: **Second.**

PAGANO: Are there any other comments on this issue? Commissioner Sweeney, do you have any comments?

SWEENEY: The language at the beginning, again, the intent in the discussion at the Committee level at least from a majority of the Committee members was to give the Superintendent the leeway to make the decisions in the emergency situations. I have no problem with the approval at the bottom of the, I'm sorry, the language change at the end of the sentences. I would say that the Superintendent and the Board deems appropriate would be clearer language for me but I would not be comfortable with changing the first section.

PAGANO: Any other comments?

ORSO: Could you just read it over again if you don't mind?

CLERK: On the first sentence, "in the event that schools are unexpectedly closed under a municipal, state or federal mandate for ten (10) or more consecutive school days, and with the approval of the Board of Education, the Superintendent will provide".... Then we go to the last sentence. "These procedures will remain in effect, by decision of the Superintendent and the Board of Education, until such time the Superintendent deems appropriate."

J. VAN STONE: Just "until a time deemed appropriate" since we're both making the decision.

CLERK: "until a time".

PAGANO: Why don't we take a vote to see if this motion goes any further and then we can come back

SERRANO-ADORNO: Can I make a comment President Pagano. Thank you, through you, my only concern with adding that statement is that God forbid something happened like this to try to get all of us together to approve something that the Superintendent could make the decision herself. That would be my concern, that what if we're all not available and she needs to do, make a decision. Let's say something happened at three o'clock in the morning, she needs to make a decision herself that she should be able to do that. So I'm not sure, like I can see where Ann is coming from, and I agree that maybe it should come somewhere in the end, like I get what Jason is saying but I think in case of an emergency that is her duty as a Superintendent to make that sudden decision. Something like this that happened was so unexpected. So I get where the Board should be notified but I think overall it's up to the Superintendent to make the decision for our district.

PAGANO: Okay, let's take a roll call vote on this amendment going forward.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON AMENDMENT:

Yeas: Commissioners Brown, Harvey, Orso, J. Van Stone, and T. Van Stone – 5

Nays: Commissioners Serrano-Adorno, Stango, Sweeney, and President Pagano – 4

CLERK: Five/four, motion to, the amendment passes.

PAGANO: What is the next order of business now?

J. VAN STONE: You have to go to the underlying amended motion to approve.

CLERK: Yes.

PAGANO: Charles, is your hand up?

STANGO: Yes, my hand is up. **I'd like to make a further friendly amendment to that motion.** I'd like to make a motion to amend the current motion that deletes the words "the following" in the second sentence of that motion. In other words right now it reads In the event of such a closure, the Superintendent's grading procedures will supersede the following formulas and grading policies. I'd like to remove "the following" from that sentence. **I'd like to make a friendly motion to amend that.**

SERRANO-ADORNO: **Second.**

PAGANO: Any discussion?

STANGO: The discussion would be I think that removing the words will make it, and putting them on the end of that paragraph like we talked about in Committee, would make it for a clearer understanding of the meaning of the motion.

PAGANO: Any other comments?

J. VAN STONE: Mr. President, I would tend to agree with Charles. I thought we already did this honestly; I missed that in my earlier motion. The language "the following" was when we were leading off with this paragraph. Now it's my understanding that this paragraph will be at the tail end so there's really nothing following this language so deleting the words "the following" makes sense.

PAGANO: Okay, any other discussion points?

SWEENEY: Just briefly. We needed to bring the language forward that was approved by the Committee, this little piece did not appear until after the Committee had taken a vote so the proper procedure was to bring it forward as an amendment. I thank Commissioner Stango for noticing that.

PAGANO: Okay, any other discussion? Alright I guess we take a vote now on this amended amendment.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON MOTION TO AMEND THE AMENDED PARAGRAPH AS FOLLOWS:

In the event that schools are unexpectedly closed under a municipal, state or federal mandate for ten (10) or more consecutive school days, and with the approval of the Board of Education, the Superintendent will provide equitable grading procedures in the best interest of all students that account for such a closure and communicate the changes in procedures. In the event of such a closure, the Superintendent's grading procedures will supersede **the following** formulas and grading policies. These procedures will remain in effect, by decision of the Superintendent and the Board of Education, until a time deemed appropriate.

Yeas: Commissioners Brown, Harvey, Orso, Serrano-Adorno, Stango, Sweeney
J. Van Stone, T. Van Stone, and President Pagano – 9

CLERK: Motion carries.

PAGANO: What do we got to vote on next?

CLERK: The amended, amended motion.

PAGANO: Okay, can I have a motion to do whatever Carrie just said.

SWEENEY: **Motion to approve item 13.1 as amended.**

HARVEY: **Second.**

PAGANO: Discussion? Let's do a roll call vote.

ROLL CALL VOTE TO APPROVE the addition of the following paragraph to policy 6146.1, High School Grading/QPR; policy 6146.11, Elementary School Uniform Grading; and policy 6146.111, Middle School Uniform Grading:

In the event that schools are unexpectedly closed under a municipal, state or federal mandate for ten (10) or more consecutive school days, and with the approval of the Board of Education, the Superintendent will provide equitable grading procedures in the best interest of all students that account for such a closure and communicate the changes in procedures. In the event of such a closure, the Superintendent's grading procedures will supersede formulas and grading policies. These procedures will remain in effect, by decision of the Superintendent and the Board of Education, until a time deemed appropriate.

Yeas: Commissioners Brown, Harvey, Orso, Serrano-Adorno, Stango, Sweeney J. Van Stone, T. Van Stone, and President Pagano – 9

CLERK: Motion carries nine/zero.

14. SUPERINTENDENT'S NOTIFICATION TO THE BOARD

Upon a motion by Commissioner Sweeney and duly seconded by Commissioner Harvey, it was voted unanimously to receive and place on file items 14.1 through 14.3, as listed:

14.1 Teacher new hires:

<u>Name</u>		<u>Assignment</u>		<u>Effective</u>
Moro	Jeffrey	WAMS	Music	03/04/2020

14.2 Resignations:

Bradley, Billie-Jo – Tinker Grade 5, effective 06/30/2020.

DiMaio, Dante – KHS Technology Education, effective 11/06/2020.

Doyle, Tara – WCA ELA, effective 06/30/2020.

Faucher, Richard – W. Cross/Annex Art, effective 06/30/2020.

Guasp, Henry – Academic Academy Math, effective 06/30/2020.

Mirles-Vasquez, Charito – Hopeville Grade 1, effective 06/30/2020.
Rotatori, Kayla – WAMS PE/Health, effective 06/30/2020.
Ruotolo, Richard – WHS Music, effective 06/30/2020.
Selmanaj, Fabian – Duggan Math, effective 06/30/2020.
Violette, Wayne – Wilby ROTC, effective 06/30/2020.
Yuiza, Gladynell – Wilson Special Education, effective 06/30/2020.

14.3 Retirements:

D'Angelo, Joann – WAMS Visual Arts, effective 04/01/2020.
DiPaola, Nancy – WHS Allied Health, effective 6/30/2020.
Giskin, Miriam – Chase Reading, effective 06/30/2020.
Lepper, Mary – W. Cross Literacy Facilitator, effective 6/30/2020.
McGrath, Mark – Walsh ES Grades K – 3, effective 06/30/2020.
Palleria, Lynne – WHS Business, effective 6/30/2020.
~~Skurkis, Teresa – Maloney Gr 4-5 Special Ed, effective 7/14/2020 (NOTE:
duplicate with incorrect date; correct date was received at the 3/26/20 BOE
meeting.)~~
Spinella, Patricia – Walsh Pre-k, effective 06/30/2020.
~~Williams, Joyce – WHS Allied Health, effective 6/30/2020. (NOTE: duplicate
from 3/26/20 BOE meeting.)~~

PAGANO: Is there any discussion? All in favor, opposed, thank you. Item 15 – Unfinished Business of Preceding Meeting Only? Anybody have anything? Any Other Unfinished, New, or Miscellaneous Business? Vice President Harvey.

HARVEY: Thank you, quickly. It might be old business but we're going to look at it as a new item. Mr. President, I am, you made a decision a few weeks ago, we were talking about the issue of Commissioners attending Committee meetings and then there was a discussion or concern about non-committee members being able to attend the meeting. So you ruled that because of the quorum issue that the non-member would have to attend, would attend as part of the community. So the request here, and I'm not sure if this needs to go through policy or not or if it's just a common courtesy and that is that we allow the commissioner, as you recommended, to attend as part of the community and that if they had any comments they could make it as part of the community not as a commissioner. The request is that we allow public speaking, if the public who is attending the meeting wishes to speak that we allow that to happen. So that's the request. So you can rule on that or not but I think in regards to transparency and particularly with all the changes that we are taking in the education department we want to have transparency and let the public know that we encourage them to come and visit and to speak with us, attend our sub-committee meetings. I'm making that recommendation that we just allow a period of time in our sub-committee meetings for the public to speak.

Lastly, I want to congratulate Mr. Foote for being the Teacher of the Year. Mr. Foote is just a phenomenal, phenomenal teacher. He came into the district on point. I have heard from our community leaders that they're very pleased, particularly those that have attended Walsh School, they're very pleased that he has been recommended so I want to personally congratulate him on his achievement. And that's all I have Mr. President.

PAGANO: Commissioner Serrano-Adorno.

SERRANO-ADORNO: Thank you President. I have a few notes I wanted to express. I know I already said some already. First and foremost I do want to express my appreciation to Superintendent Ruffin and to her entire staff for always maintaining transparent and consecutive updates and communications since school had to close abruptly in March. We all had concerns and questions and you worked relentlessly in answering them yourself along with your entire team and you continue to do that. So we might not be there to see all of the behind the scenes that occur to try to get our district where it needs to be but based on all your updates and based on today's wonderful presentation of your entire staff I can personally see you have completed an extensive amount of work and continue to do so relentlessly. You don't hesitate to reply to my texts, it doesn't matter how late, you still reply, you're a late owl like myself, or our emails. And again, so again I just want to thank you and everybody behind the scenes that are working tirelessly to get our families and students the help that they need to continue their education.

As we heard from . . . about why is it taking our district so long to get the virtual distance learning up and running, I agree with Dr. Epperson when she mentioned it's better to get it right the first time then to go back. We are going to make mistakes. But I do want to say that not all districts are the same. There are other districts that obviously have advantages compared to our urban district such as Waterbury and they have more resources. I believe I read an article that Commissioner Brown may have shared with us, it could have been from CAFE, and please Liz correct me if I'm wrong, but I believe it was the Glastonbury School that their students had iPads and they were already up and running by the week that schools were closed. But as I mentioned they had an advantage because they were already utilizing the iPads for the higher grade students in some type of virtual learning. So they got that advantage over us. We're lucky enough to get those generous donations to provide our students with the Chromebooks. But again not all districts have the same advantages as other districts so I definitely understand parents' concerns as . . . we always try to ensure that the equity in education that all students have access to appropriate technology and connectivity, we discussed that today. And I do appreciate the daily updates on Twitter as well as the other social media I have seen but I would definitely like to recommend and try to utilize Instagram as another social media platform, to use it as another source of communication. And even Dr. Ruffin, as you mentioned, there are families that we still haven't been able to get in contact with, maybe as a suggestion I thought about that maybe we could try to track them through social media since most families and our students are communicating and prominently using that probably on a daily basis. But I do want to continue to celebrate the students, the families, and the staff . . . during this pandemic I've seen pictures and accomplishments being shared and that would be something positive to see everyone's hard work or to just simply spread cheer so that we could post those accomplishments on our district webpage or other social media platforms.

On another more important note, I have reached or seen a lot of parents concerned and comments so I want to send out this message in particular to the guardians. I'm sorry that I'm taking too long Mr. President but I did my research really thoroughly, I can't sleep so this is at three o'clock in the morning I'm doing this. I did remember that the CAFE Executive Director Mr. Rader mentioned that we understand support for families is desperately needed, it is not only an educational issue, parents need help

understanding how software works even if the context is difficult for them. We must remember that not all parents speak English so we must prepare communications in the language they speak. Which I can say I've seen many communications going out in other languages from Superintendent Ruffin so again thank you for that. For myself growing up my parents only spoke Spanish, I wasn't allowed to speak English at home, so if this was me back then I would have a difficult time that my parents wouldn't be able to help me unless it came in their language. But as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact our way of life we do recognize that schools and families . . . daily challenges to support ourselves and our students. As the number of cases increase so does the level of fear, stress, and anxiety being experienced in our community. So as we shift to remote learning environments it is also important to not overlook the mental health impacts that this may also be having on our staff and our families and students. I personally, my son, tested positive, and that was a scary moment so if I had a child home, which I did, I had a college student in my home, Jacob, I wasn't really able to help him. He's pretty much independent anyways but I could only imagine that there are families that are going through worse. We've had relatives that have passed from it so I think we have to also take that into consideration. And also Karen to your point that you mentioned the trauma, the National School Boards Association Center for Safe Schools in collaboration with the Attachment & Trauma Network has hosted a virtual roundtable discussion on navigating virtual education with calm, connectedness, and compassion. So during these uncertain times with school closures and significant shifts away from normal routines, many people have expressed concerns about the impact on their students' academic journeys, we all agree with that, but I want to encourage the parents and educators and the students to remember the bigger picture, this is the time to focus on and be grateful for your family safety, health, and well-being. Make building strong family relationships a priority as I have. Reach out to your neighbors, your friends and others in your community to check in and offer support. We're all going to get through this together. Each family is experiencing this time differently especially now that our schools are approaching this Google Meets and Google Classroom. The work commitments that adults are juggling and the unique needs of each child. I worry about our underserved population in particular and for our children with challenges and learning differences who rely on school for food, safety, therapeutic care, and stability. And I know that our educators are working tirelessly as well to meet the needs of all their students to the best of their ability.

I'm almost done, Mr. President. For those families who have been given remote lessons and resources from the schools, try to honor as best as you can what the school is asking your child to do. If the workload feels like too much for your child in your home situation, communicate with your elementary school teachers or the administrators at the school and have your middle and high school students maybe advocate for themselves directly as well and reach out to their school teachers or administrators. If you set up a routine your child will be learning important academic and social and emotional skills that will prepare them for returning to the classroom and help them thrive in and out of school. So please, take a breath, smell the flowers, be gentle on yourselves, be patient with your kids and with your partner, have empathy for the teachers and express your gratitude for them and others. Try to embrace and enjoy this family time and please stay healthy. Remember we always put our students first. We're here for you and this too shall pass. Thank you Mr. President.

PAGANO: Those are wonderful words, thank you very much. Any other comments? Commissioner Ann Sweeney, the floor is yours.

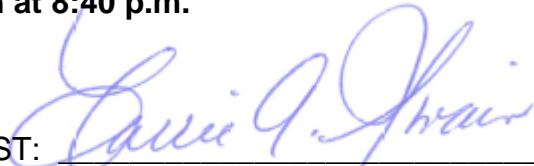
SWEENEY: Thank you Mr. President, I'll try to make it very brief but Dr. Ruffin I did want to say that I'm quite impressed and amazed with all the work that you've been doing throughout the pandemic. Your leadership, I've been going through all the updates, you've been sending us the information always, amazing, timely, on point and just when I think there isn't anything more you could possibly do you send something else and something you are doing, something unique that you are doing. You have kept us notified all along about the distribution of laptops. We knew all through how many laptops were being distributed, you sent us little spreadsheets, we knew how many were designated for each school, how many were picked up. Your outreach to try to reach parents, our website, Facebook, call out from the IRIS system, just, I don't know what more you could have done to reach people and yet you continue and your staff continues to try to reach out to every single parent, every single child. It's an amazing job by everyone. I applaud you doctor, I applaud your Central Office staff, your principals and vice principals, and I'm amazed at what we saw from our teachers tonight. The teachers are out there on the frontlines even, you know distancing, and they're doing a superior job and I could not as a citizen in this City be more grateful for everything that all of you are doing. Thank you.

PAGANO: Thank you Commissioner Sweeney. Applause.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Commissioner Orso and duly seconded by Commissioner Brown, it was voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:40 p.m.

ATTEST:



Carrie A. Swain, Clerk
Board of Education