

Coventry Board of Education
Coventry, Connecticut

Board of Education Special Meeting
Approved Minutes of Thursday, April 7, 2022
Administration Building Conference Room

Board Members Present:

Jennifer Beausoleil, Chairperson
Eugene Marchand, Vice-Chairperson
Mary Kortmann, Secretary
Peter DePaola
Emma Eaton
Courtney Rossignol
Christina Williams (arrived 6:41 p.m.)

Administrators present:

Dr. David J. Petrone, Superintendent of Schools
Robert Carroll, Director of Finance and Operations

Audience: CHS Girls Basketball Team members, Coach Clancy, and family members; William Trudelle, Director of Physical Plant and Facilities; Cathie Drury, Director of Educational Technology; Beth Giller, Director of Pupil and Staff Support Services; Michele Mullaly, Director of Teaching and Learning; Joseph Blake, CHS Principal; Dena DeJulius, CNH Principal; Jennifer DeRagon, GHR Principal; and Ronda Carrie, CGS Principal.

I. Call to Order

J. Beausoleil called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. Salute to the Flag

J. Beausoleil led the Salute to the Flag.

III. Audience of Citizens

There were none.

IV. New Business: Recognition of the CHS Girls Basketball Team - Outstanding Season

Dr. Petrone talked about the season the team had and was glad he was able to see the last game at Mohegan Sun. He introduced Coach Clancy, who said a few words about the team and the season. Mr. Blake also thanked the team for a great season. There were congratulations from the Board.

V. Old Business

V.A. Information and Possible VOTE: FY2023 Budget

C. Williams arrived.

J. Beausoleil said that the Town Council met and reduced the BOE FY23 budget by \$100,000. She noted that there were already existing additions to the budget that included the locked in oil and diesel prices and the impact of settling the custodial contract. She added that Dr. Petrone has suggested potential reductions for the Board to review tonight, which will cover these deficiencies.

Dr. Petrone said the administrators met and went through various line items to come up with the list. He added that it has been very difficult to hire para-educators and, with that, the budget has been adjusted by reducing four vacant para-educator positions and adding one certified person. He said this would not affect one site more than another; resources would be shifted.

C. Williams asked about the ESSER II funds and the elimination of the technology technician. Dr. Petrone said the grant will be adjusted accordingly.

C. Rossignol asked about the tech tickets put in by staff and if the budget needed to be adjusted to address those needs. Ms. Drury noted there are the usual variety of issues, but nothing that needs extra financial attention.

C. Williams asked about the elimination of the aviation controllers. Dr. Petrone said we will continue to use the old ones for now.

C. Williams asked about the academic return on investment for Raz-Kids. She proposed to swap that with the aviation controllers.

Dr. Petrone said, while this is the Board's decision, these are the suggestions from the administrators of the buildings, who are most familiar with the programs and what is needed and what is working.

J. Beausoleil said the difference in students using these two items is significant; 16 using the aviation program and 365 using Raz-Kids.

E. Marchand said he trusts the process and the administrative team.

E. Eaton spoke in favor of Raz-Kids and said it is assisting with equity issues.

C. Rossignol said she would like to hear more about the program and the academic return on investment.

Ms. Carrie reviewed what Raz-Kids does and how it allows the teachers to facilitate the reading program. She said we don't have Raz-Kids because the PTO began purchasing it, we have Raz-Kids because it is a good compliment to our literacy program.

The Board discussed Raz-Kids and other programs used for literacy sources.

C. Williams talked about the cost of Newsela and questioned its academic return on investment. Dr. Petrone said this is a vetted program that can be used at various reading levels.

Dr. Petrone reviewed the budget process and how items are chosen and that serious deliberations take place throughout the process. He said we would not be getting the positive student assessment results we are getting if we weren't choosing the right materials. The administrators talked about how widely used this program is.

Dr. Petrone said these programs are vetted and continually reviewed and programs that are not working are removed.

