

Coventry Board of Education
Coventry, Connecticut

Board of Education Regular Meeting
Approved Minutes of Thursday, September 9, 2021
Administration Building Conference Room

Board of Education Members Present:

Jennifer Beausoleil, Chairperson
William Oros, Vice Chairperson
Eugene Marchand, Secretary
Mary Kortmann
Michael Sobol
Christina Williams
Robert Williams

Administrators Present:

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

Audience members present: Jennifer DeRagon, GHR Principal; Cathie Drury, Director of Educational Technology; Michele Mullaly, Director of Teaching and Learning; Dena DeJulius, CNH Principal; Ronda Carrie, CGS Principal; Dr. Beth Giller, PSSS Director: MVP honorees, Kim Diaz, Jennifer DuBois, Lisa McLean, Paula Sandahl, Sarah Wooden, Therese McKeever, Lanna Ibrahim; student Alex Kraus and family members; Coach Vanderrest; and several citizens.

I. Call to Order

J. Beausoleil called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

II. Salute to the Flag

J. Beausoleil led the salute to the flag.

III. Audience of Citizens

J. Beausoleil read the email sent in by Kelsey Donovan, which is attached to these minutes.

Christina Williams, 436 Ripley Hill Road, was present to make suggestions on the beginning of school; the statement is attached to these minutes.

Robin Gallagher of 984 Main Street was present to speak in favor of wearing masks in the schools. She thanked Dr. Petrone for keeping the schools open last year.

Heidi Pawloski 2544 Main Street, was present to speak against mask wearing by students in schools.

IV. Report of the Superintendent

Dr. Petrone reviewed a few items related to the start of school. He thanked parents for their support and noted how happy students are to be back in school.

IV.A. Information: Welcome Student Representative Celia Delvecchio

Dr. Petrone explained that Celia had a volleyball game and could not make it this week.

IV.B. Recognition: CHS Student, Alex Kraus for Athletic Achievement

Dr. Petrone recognized Alex for his outstanding achievement and he noted the attached press release.

Coach Vanderrest said a few words about Alex.

J. Beausoleil commended Alex's accomplishments.

E. Marchand noted how proud the Board is.

R. Williams asked Alex about his future plans. Alex said he would like to continue athletics into his collegiate career. He added it has been a great honor to represent Coventry.

IV.C. Recognition: Staff - Most Valuable Patriots 2020-2021 School Year - Coventry Public School's Nursing Team, Kim Dias, Jennifer DuBois, Lisa McLean, Paula Sandahl, and Sarah Woodin

Dr. Petrone reviewed the Most Valuable Patriot award program and said he thought it was important to recognize these staff members at the Board level.

Dr. Giller said a few words about Ms. Diaz.

Ms. Carrie said a few words about Ms. DuBois.

Ms. DeJulius said a few words about Ms. McLean.

Ms. Drury said a few words about Ms. Sandahl.

Ms. DeRagon said a few words about Ms. Woodin.

Dr. Petrone spoke about the nurse group and specifically the two present, Therese McKeever and Lanna Ibrahim.

J. Beausoleil commented on the work the Nurses did over the past year and a half and noted the Board's appreciation.

IV.D. Information: Opening of the 2021-2022 School Year

Dr. Petrone reviewed the beginning of school activities, including Convocation and the first day of school. He talked about the transportation issues surrounding the shortage of bus drivers. He added that, in general, it takes the first two weeks of school to work out the issues of late buses.

J. Beausoleil noted the Transportation Committee will meet next week, as is normal procedure.

M. Kortmann asked about the notifications of COVID-19 cases to parents; Dr. Petrone said at this time the procedure will be the same as last year, which is sending a notice for each positive case.

C. Williams asked about the transportation communications and if there is a way to consistently communicate with parents the current situation. Dr. Petrone said during the first two weeks of school there could be a 45 minute delay and if parents want to, they can call the school at any time. He added, parents are very understanding during this time.

C. Williams talked about parent volunteers and the requirement for vaccinations. She said that if others have the option to not have vaccinations, due to medical reasons, parents should have that option as well. J. Beausoleil said it was a choice of either vaccinated volunteers or no volunteers. Dr. Petrone said this was the simplest way to have volunteers in the schools with all of the moving parts and at the same time to keep students safe.

C. Williams is concerned about potential legal action being taken against the district. J. Beausoleil disagreed.

MOTION: To add a discussion and vote to the agenda to have Shipman and Goodwin review the district's decision to require volunteers to be vaccinated.

By: C. Williams

Seconded: R. Williams

Result: Motion fails 3-4 (J. Beausoleil, W. Oros, E. Marchand, M. Kortmann against)

IV.E. Information: Superintendent's 2021-2022 Goal Presentation

Dr. Petrone shared a presentation on the District Goals for the 2021-22 school year, which are available on the district's website.

R. Williams talked about community involvement and noted that there is a Community Conversation scheduled and invited people to attend.

C. Williams asked about goal 1.7 and enrichment for high performing students and said she would like to see more in the core areas. R. Williams agreed and noted that there are students out there who are looking for more. Dr. Petrone said this is happening now within individual classrooms and beyond.

R. Williams referenced goal 2.5 regarding chronic absenteeism and wanted to know where we are and what the next step is. Dr. Petrone said we are 6 days in and most students are excited to be back in school. He added that a plan is in development to communicate with parents and there is training for staff to support families.

C. Williams asked about goal 2.2 and will parents be forewarned about this program. Dr. Petrone said, yes parents would be notified.

The Board discussed the goals and how they are measured.

V. Report of the Chairman

J. Beausoleil shared her report which included congratulations on starting a new school year. She added the Advanced Placement data is amazing and she is looking forward to the full assessment report on September 30. She reviewed a few other opening of school items.

VI. Communications

J. Beausoleil noted the thank you note that is included for the Board from Project Graduation.

VII. VOTE: Approval of Minutes

VII.A. Approve Minutes of Special Meeting of August 26, 2021

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the special meeting of August 26, 2021.

By: E. Marchand

Seconded: M. Kortmann

Result: Motion passes 5-0-2 (W. Oros and R. Williams abstained)

VII.B. Approve Minutes of Regular Meeting of August 26, 2021

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the regular meeting of August 26, 2021.

By: E. Marchand

Seconded: M. Kortmann

Result: Motion passes 5-0-2 (W. Oros and R. Williams abstained)

VIII. Old Business

VIII.A. Discussion and Possible VOTE: Approve revisions to Policy 1252 - Possession of Deadly Weapons or Firearms

J. Beausoleil said this policy was warned at the previous meeting and is ready for a vote.

MOTION: To Approve the revisions to policy 1252 - Possession of Deadly Weapons or Firearms.

By: W. Oros

Seconded: E. Marchand

Discussion: C. Williams discussed the definition of Peace Officer and wondered if the district is covered. Dr. Petrone explained that this is allowed under law. It was confirmed that the policy is from Shipman and Goodwin.

Result: Motion passes unanimously

VIII.B. Information and Possible VOTE: Microgrid Waiver Letter

J. Beausoleil reviewed the most recent waiver letter that has been thoroughly vetted and noted it is ready to be signed.

MOTION: To authorize the Superintendent to sign the Consent to Authorization letter as presented.

By: W. Oros

Seconded: M. Kortmann

Result: Motion passes unanimously

IX. New Business

IX.A. Information and Possible VOTE: Approve the CABE Board of Distinction Award Application

J. Beausoleil noted the CABE Board of Distinction Award application attached.

MOTION: To approve the application for the CABE Board of Distinction Award 2021 as presented.

By: R. Williams

Seconded: M. Kortmann

Result: Motion carries unanimously

X. Report of Board Members

X.A. Information: Fiscal Committee Report, Meeting of September 9, 2021

W. Oros reviewed the discussions at the Fiscal Committee meeting, including the Emergency Connectivity Fund, ARP/ESSER and ESSER II grants, the Capital Improvement Plan, Management Report items, and the preschool.

XI. Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

By: W. Oros

Seconded: E. Marchand

Result: Motion carries unanimously

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberlee Arey Delorme
Board Clerk

Approved: September 30, 2021

From: [Kelsey Tutto](#)
To: [audienceBOE](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Audience BOE
Date: Thursday, September 9, 2021 3:49:59 PM

We would like to thank Dr. Petrone and the Board of Education for continuing to keep our children safe by following science and keeping masks in place. By having these protocols, our children have been able to continue their education in the classroom with minimal interruption. We're thankful to live in Coventry and have the support of our Administrators, Educators and the Board of Education.
Sean and Kelsey Donovan

From: [Chrissy](#)
To: [audienceBOE](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] school re-opening.
Date: Thursday, September 9, 2021 1:13:54 PM

Christina Williams
Ripley Hill Rd

First I want to congratulate the superintendent on a great start to the school year! Despite hurricanes and pandemics, we are back! Many of the changes incorporated in August - are being felt - library in library, art back in the art studio - awesome.

However, there is still some room for improvement where small tweaks make a big difference. I am writing to request a few subtle changes to the school re-opening plan.

1) Parental volunteers are required to show proof of vaccination while staff and teachers can medically opt out, or choose to test. Why are the same options not provided to parents. This is intentional discrimination and I am requesting review of this policy by Shipman and Goodwin attorneys to protect the district from unnecessary lawsuits/discrimination claims.

2. Music class singing - Guilford district has brought chorus back. And Columbia is singing in music class masked - why can't we??

3. Playground separation - Waterford has no imaginary boundaries across their playground, and their COVID spread has not been different than ours - what is driving these imaginary boundaries and how do we stop the air from moving from one part of the playground to the next?

Next I would like to discuss communication and transportation. On Wednesday my two daughters attending CGS and GHR were 45 minutes late home. Panicked at the 30 min mark I called CGS, and was told an email was sent. Yes I received it but after I was already waiting for them outside (not checking email). I received no communication from GHR. The district wide text message was received on thursday - thank you.

Friday, due to a bus driver shortage we were also 30 minutes late. No notification came from GHR again, and CGS notification was sent out after they arrived home.

The lack of communication incites panick on parents needlessly - its like that split moment when your child moves from your right side to your left and look right and dont see them... Except it lasts much longer. All parents understand the workload to get all kids home safely - and understand delays - we are simply asking for communication.

On Tuesday of this week - I received email notification of an opt in to test messaging for transportation issues (I hope this is a sign of things to come) and this situation is already being resolved?

My last request is for transparency of the curriculum. Early this year in Greenwich CT an entirely inappropriate social-emotional video was shown to second graders, In Manchester CT a teacher resigned as she felt the curriculum was too indoctrinating of racial divide and across the country there has an established push to infiltrate academics with rhetoric of

social/political opinions.

I am asking that the cameras purchased by the district for use in hybrid classes for all classes be turned on not for teaching but for protection of our children, parents, teachers and districts.

To protect students privacy, cameras can remain angled at the front of the classroom, and/or parents of the class can grant permission for just their class. We have already proven we can do this last year without any of the additional precautions.

Lets work to protect the district and provide transparency into our classrooms with already tax payer funded technology. After all, I truly believe we have nothing to hide.

Thank you
Chrissy