

TRUMBULL PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
TRUMBULL, CONNECTICUT  
Regular Meeting – March 9, 2021  
**Via Audio/Video Conferencing**

The Trumbull Board of Education met via video/audio conferencing for a Regular Meeting.

Members present:

L. Timpanelli, Board Chairman  
T. Gallo, Vice Chairman  
J. Norcel, Board Secretary  
S. Kerr  
M. Petitti  
A. Squicciarro  
M. Ward

Agenda Item I—Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Agenda Item II—Preliminary Business

A. Salute to the Flag - The Public Session began with a salute to the Flag.

B. Correspondence – Mrs. Norcel read the following correspondence:

Sarah Broas wrote in support of the Superintendent’s proposed budget. The Chair answered Mr. Rosenberg's questions concerning BOE procedures. Scott Zimov and Siobhan Everts feel we should return to 5 full days of school. Mike Straffaroni explained reasons for keeping Wednesdays 1/2 day for staff for the rest of this school year. Dana Proaccini requests we open the middle schools to full capacity. Marylena Kouronis expressed her gratitude for the reopening plans announced by Dr. Semmel on March 4, 2021.

Frank Squicciarro, Traci Galla, Jonathan Dizney, Allison Saunders, Lisa Commisky, Maryland Kouronis, Aarika Friend, Megan Zanesky, Catherine Martini, Mercedes Mullins, Catherine Lamy and Kristine Saccone all wrote to the BOE expressing their support of the budget submitted to the First Selectman since the budget restores critical personnel and responds to recommendations made in the Operational Review.

C. Public Comment

PTA Council President, Marylena Kouronis read a letter submitted to the First Selectman in support of the Superintendent’s budget proposal citing that it achieves our objectives in advocating for our students and moving our district forward.

D. Superintendent Report - Dr. Semmel

- Dr. Semmel extends his appreciation to the BOE for all their hard work and dedication to celebrate March as BOE appreciation month.
- Thanks to the Business Office for their efforts in coordinating the \$1 million received to date from the COVID Relief Fund. We have used the money provided in this grant to update ventilation systems, install touchless faucets and water fountains and pay for increases in substitute teacher costs.

- Thanks to Director of Health Lucy Bango and Director of Nursing Lynn Steinbrick for coordinating our recent vaccine clinic at THS. Our nurses performed a huge service for our staff that were vaccinated on March 5 and there are more vaccines on the way.
- We are applying for a grant for \$705,000 that is earmarked to help our students transition back to school by supporting their academic and social emotional needs. Dr. Semmel met with the Teacher Union Executive Council to discuss future goals and we will be using an electronic tool, *thought by exchange*, that will provide important community feedback.

#### E. Board Chairman Report

Board Chair Lucinda Timpanelli is excited to see the teacher presentation of Pear Deck technology that is being used for remote and in classroom learning. The Board wishes to thank Lucienne Bango and Lynn Steinbrick for their tireless efforts in providing vaccines to Trumbull staff. Also, we appreciate the Trumbull residents who have communicated with the First Selectmen to support the Superintendent's budget proposal.

#### F. Student BOE Representatives Report-Jack Allen and Gabriella Biondi

- Congratulations to Trumbull High's clarinet section leader Kate Vasquez. Kate was selected for the National Association of Music Education's All-Eastern Honors Ensemble. Kate is also a member of the Tri-Music Honor Society and performs on first clarinet for the Greater Connecticut Youth Orchestra.
- THS seniors have received news that a senior prom will be taking place June 4th at Trumbull High School. Thank you to the PTSA, the Senior Activities Committee, the leadership of the class of 2021, the community, and administration for making this possible!
- The Red Cross Club will be hosting a blood drive at THS on Friday, March 26th from 7:30 a.m. - 1:15 p.m. Students 17 and older and THS staff are welcome to donate blood on that day. For more information please contact Mr. Evans in B1.
- Hillcrest will be participating in a virtual field trip to the Beardsley Zoo. The Hillcrest Student Council has created an initiative called "Miss You Mondays." This program allows in person students an opportunity to connect with remote learners through Google classroom. The Science Bowl Team, led by Ms. Ardito, participated in a competition on February 27th.
- At Daniels Farm, the PTA has announced the State winners of this year's Reflections Program entitled, "I matter because." Students submitted works of art in dance choreography, film production, literature, music composition, photography, and visual arts. Several students placed on the state level.
- Our elementary schools are celebrating Read Aloud Week with visits from authors. At Frenchtown, a fifth grade student is engaged in a project to celebrate women's history month.

### Agenda Item III—Reports/Action Items

#### A. Minutes: Regular Meeting – February 23, 2021

It was moved (Norcel) and seconded (Kerr) to approve the minutes as presented. Vote: Unanimous in favor.

B. Personnel – Dr. Semmel

Dr. Semmel presented the following certified resignations:

Bershefsky, Julia; Kindergarten teacher at Frenchtown Elementary School (currently on a personal leave of absence) since August 2006, resigning effective June 30, 2021.

Cutrone, Melanie; Kindergarten teacher at Jane Ryan Elementary School (currently on a personal leave of absence) since August 2015, resigning effective June 30, 2021.

It was moved (Gallo) and seconded (Ward) to accept the above certified resignations as presented. Vote: Unanimous in favor.

C. Teacher Presentation: Using Pear Deck to Increase Student Engagement

Teacher Emily Schuessler presented a lesson on social and emotional awareness using Pear Deck technology. Pear Deck allows teachers to interact with their remote and in classroom learners in real time and students can participate allowing teachers to get immediate responses. Pear Deck uses creative formats to help keep students engaged. Madison student Tate Sullivan joined in the conversation and remarked that he uses Pear Deck in all of his classes and how it has made learning more engaging and innovative.

D. Reopening Update - Dr. Semmel

- Starting on Wednesday, March 24, all school buildings will be open on Wednesdays for in person learning on a half day schedule. Elementary schools will now have 4 ½ days of in person learning and middle and THS students will have an “A” day on March 24 with future scheduling to be advised.
- We are eliminating the hybrid model at the middle schools and targeting all students to return to in person learning beginning the week of March 29, 2021. We are asking parents to please respond to a survey this week to help improve our planning process.
- We also hope to eliminate the hybrid model at the high school, but we must carefully examine the number of returning students to ensure a safe environment for our students and staff. The Administration is sending a survey to parents this week so we can properly evaluate.
- Plans are underway to sponsor a safe environment senior prom on the campus of THS this June.

E. Approval/Update to 2020-2021 District Calendar - Dr. Iwanicki

Teaching and learning will benefit from additional teacher time to support both professional learning on technology integration and planning time with colleagues. Teachers at every grade level reported on how teachers are making wise use of their time on Wednesdays for much needed collaboration and lesson planning to implement new technologies, meeting with students to offer extra help and attending technology and educational workshops offered by the District.

Thus, the administration proposes a revised 2020-2021 District Calendar that supports built-in professional learning and planning time over the next six weeks. The following days are proposed to be special early closing days for grades K-12 students. Student contact time at each level will be dictated by our early closing schedule. • Wed., March 17 • Wed., March 24 • Wed., March 31 • Wed., April 7 • Wed., April 21 • Wed., April 28

It was moved (Gallo) and seconded (Norcel) to approve the revision to the 2020-2021 district calendar as presented in the above paragraph. Vote: Unanimous in favor.

F. Curriculum Update - Dr. Iwanicki

Dr. Iwanicki gave an update on curriculum and practices in place on how to best support our students and teachers. The District offers Virtual Math Nights that are attended by elementary school parents; these are live sessions that offer tips on how help students with our current math curriculum. Dr. Semmel has met with department heads to inquire about their instructional needs, and Dr. Iwanicki met with them recently as well in which they spoke about way to increase engagement at the high school level. We are in the process of creating a summer explorations program with expanded reading and math review courses, and a professional learning day for teachers is scheduled for March 22, 2021 to support curriculum delivery which includes teacher presenters as well as teacher choice. The written curriculum is also being reviewed to establish a schedule for future curriculum guide review and revision.

G. Operational Review Update

Mr. Hendrickson gave an update on the status of implementing the recommendations to the Operational Review that was done by PKF O'Connor Davies. As of this date, we have completed 40 recommendations, 21 are in progress and 5 are pending. Each item was discussed and reviewed by the Board. The complete, detailed analysis is on our TPS website. Mr. Hendrickson will continue to update the Board at the first meeting of each month.

H. Finance Committee Report

Mr. Hendrickson stated that the Finance Committee of the Board of Education met on February 25, 2021 which included the review of the financials through January 31, 2021.

A recommended transfer in the amount of \$107,624 was made from the District-wide account for Reserve for Negotiations to 4 accounts (Business Office/Admin Athletic Insurance, Assistant Superintendent/Admin Tuition, Continuing Ed/Other Purchased Services, and Curriculum Director District-wide Online Subscriptions).

It was moved (Gallo) and seconded (Kerr) to approve the transfer as presented. Vote: Unanimous in favor.

It was moved (Gallo) and seconded (Norcel) to approve the financials as of January 31, 2021. Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Adjournment

Board Members gave unanimous consent to adjourn the Public Session at 9:00 p.m.