



Serving the Towns of Bethlehem and Woodbury

**Minutes  
Regular Meeting of the Region 14 Board of Education  
Tuesday, January 3, 2023, 7:00 p.m.  
Mitchell Elementary School  
Flanders Room**

**Present:**

James Crocker, Chairman  
Christopher Matta  
Jonathan Kapstein  
Carol Ann Brown  
Christopher Griffin  
Michael Devine  
Tikva Rose  
David Butkus (\* arrived 7:20 p.m.)

**Absent:**

N/A

**Also Present:**

Brian Murphy, Superintendent  
Tina Tanguay, Director of Finance and Operations  
Patricia Paige, Recording Clerk

**Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance/Introductions**

Mr. Crocker called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.; the Pledge of Allegiance was recited and members of the Board and Administration introduced themselves.

**Approval of the Minutes**

A. *Regular Meeting, Monday, December 5, 2022*

A motion was made by Chris Matta and seconded by Jonathan Kapstein to accept/approve the minutes with the following amendment:

Item VI. Committee Reports; Subsection A; Finance Committee; include Ed Belinsky as a Region 14 member of the Horse Barn Committee.

Michael Devine and Chris Griffin abstained, motion carried.

**Superintendent's Report**

A. Bethlehem Elementary School Presentation  
Principal Yatsenick, accompanied by several students that attend Bethlehem Elementary, provided an update of current events at the school. This included the implementation of a positive behavior incentive program (PBIS), designed to recognize students for academic achievement and improvement and good deeds. Students earn tickets, later redeemed for prizes and experiences, including principal for a day, officer for a day, or a special lunch with guest.

Students Lola March, Shea Schivera, and Riley Nelson, shared some of their experiences as members of Student Council. The council, guided by Mrs. Dannenhoffer and Mrs. Casey, aims to instill civic awareness, the concept of community service and the idea of caring about others.

- B. School of Distinction - Mitchell Elementary School  
Superintendent Murphy was very pleased to inform the Board of Education that Mitchell Elementary School has been named a School of Distinction by the Connecticut State Department of Education based on overall academic achievement and high growth. The distinction places the school in the top 10 percent of all elementary schools in the State of Connecticut.

Bethlehem Elementary, though not recognized as a School of Distinction, was identified as a school rated in the top 20 percent of all elementary schools in the State of Connecticut.

- C. Student Intervention Academy Update  
Under the instrumentation of Ms. Donna Marcinek and Dr. Taryn Fernandez, Region 14 has implemented a Student Intervention Academy for the purpose of providing afterschool assistance in numeracy and literacy. Currently, there are seventy students receiving assistance, who were identified in need of through in-district assessments. The cost of the program is being paid through the Title I grant.

\*David Butkus joined the meeting

### **Committee Reports**

- A. Curriculum Committee  
Mr. Kapstein summarized the undertakings of the Curriculum Committee from their meeting on Wednesday, December 7th. Faculty members Devon Bares, Conor Gereg, and Jennifer Trocolla attended and provided a synopsis of the courses and curriculum they had brought forward to the committee for approval.

Jonathan Kapstein, speaking as the Curriculum Committee chair, recommended that the following courses and curricula be approved:

#### **Microeconomics/UConn ECE Economics 1201**

A motion was made by Jonathan Kapstein and seconded by Chris Matta to accept/approve Microeconomics/UConn ECE Economics 1201 as presented, all in favor, none opposed, motion carried unanimously.

#### **Macroeconomics/UConn ECE Economics 1202**

A motion was made by Jonathan Kapstein, seconded by Chris Matta, to accept/approve

Macroeconomics/UConn ECE Economics 1202 as presented, all in favor, none opposed, motion carried unanimously.

Both courses will earn three college credits at the UConn level.

### **Building Bridges**

A motion was made by Jonathan Kapstein and seconded by Jim Crocker to accept/approve Building Bridges as presented, all in favor, none opposed, motion carried unanimously.

### **AP English Literature and Composition/UConn/ECE English 1007**

A motion was made by Jonathan Kapstein and seconded by Jim Crocker to accept/approve AP English Literature and Composition/UConn/ECE English 1007 as presented, all in favor, none opposed, motion carried unanimously.

#### **B. Finance Committee**

Director of Finance and Operations Tina Tanguay recapped the Finance Committee report. Through December 31, 2022, revenue collected totaled \$20,119,286 or 52.07% of anticipated budgeted income. The second and final Vo-Ag tuition for 2022/2023 will be invoiced in January. Expenditures to date totaled \$18,724,042 or 48.46%.

Today is the first day that students, who did not qualify for free meals, were to required pay. Ms. Tanguay is monitoring accounts with negative balances and encouraging families to apply for free and reduced meals if they feel they may qualify. The cafeteria staff is acclimating students and families to their My School Bucks accounts after several years of nonuse.

The recent audit completed by King and King and Associates yielded clean results and no procedural recommendations. The audit was part of a three-year contract with the firm, and per district policy, will be going out to bid.

### **Board Chair Comments**

Board Chair Jim Crocker indicated that it has been an exceptionally positive start to 2022/2023 school year and cited the nationally recognized FFA program, Mitchell Elementary as a school of distinction, and Region 14's sports, arts, and AP courses as support.

He re-emphasized the Board's four focus areas of safety, academic performance, budget, and communications and environment and the major projects currently in process, which includes the high school building finalization, CAFE policy review and the horse barn.

### **Privilege of the Floor**

There was none

## **Old Business**

A. 2023-2024 School District Calendar (Second Read) Action Anticipated

### **Motion**

Chris Matta made a motion to accept/approve the 2023-2024 School District Calendar as presented, seconded by Michael Devine,

### **Further Discussion**

Tikva Rose advocated for bringing more diversity into the district calendar showing sensitivity to the different traditions that each bring America together. She validated her request with several e-mails she received from community members. She expressed her gratitude for the special holiday observance calendar and the appropriate accommodations for students who commemorate these observances, but felt the district could do better.

She proposed closing school on Yom Kippur and opening them on Veterans Day.

### **Amended Motion**

Tikva Rose made a motion to amend the motion currently on the floor to recognize Yom Kippur, September 25, 2023 as a district holiday and to replace it with another recognized district holiday such as Veterans Day, the motion was not seconded, motion failed.

Discussions ensued regarding the teachers' contractual obligation of 182 instructional days and the limited number of calendar days remaining after holiday breaks, holiday observances, snow days, and professional learning are considered.

### **Original Motion**

Tikva Rose was a nay, motion carried.

## **New Business**

A. Nonnewaug High School Graduation Date for the Class of 2023

Superintendent Murphy recommended to the Board a high school graduation date of Saturday, June 17, 2023 with a rain date of June 18, 2023.

Principal Pam Sordi offered a reasoning for the request stating that as of July 1, 2019 Public Act 19-195 removed the April 1<sup>st</sup> requirement to make a determination of graduation and permits Boards of Education to establish a high school graduation date at any time during the school year provided that the chosen date falls not earlier than the 180<sup>th</sup> day noted in the original school calendar adopted by the Board of Education.

The establishment of a date assists families with accommodations for visiting families, college orientations, military obligations, and GradNite.

A motion was made by Jonathan Kapstein and seconded by David Butkus to accept/approve the high school graduation date as presented, all in favor, none opposed, motion carried unanimously.

**Other Business**

A. Community Events

Board member Carol Ann Brown indicated that the GradNite Committee will be thankful for the establishment of a graduation date as they orchestrate the GradNite event and organize many fundraising activities.

She thanked Kathy Green, who heads the Region 14 College and Career Resource Center, for the positive publicity noted in *The Voices* referencing the on-site decision day for Western State University. She also highlighted several other articles that included PJ Day at the elementary schools, commended students at Nonnewaug High School, and Cross Country team accomplishments.

Ms. Brown highly recommended a free public program offered at the Woodbury Library, *Secrets of the Apps*, a discussion on the dangers of certain apps. Officer Rich Marsh provided an explanation and warnings.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Board of Education, Tikva Rose made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:13 p.m., seconded by Jonathan Kapstein, all in favor, none opposed, motion carried unanimously.

*Respectfully Submitted,*



*Patricia Paige*  
*Board Clerk*

*Recorded and filed subject to Board of Education approval by: Patricia Paige, Board Clerk*