



PLYMOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CENTRAL OFFICE

27 NORTH HARWINTON AVENUE
TERRYVILLE, CONNECTICUT 06786

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of Plymouth Public Schools is to challenge, inspire, and prepare all students for success in an ever-changing and complex world.

PLYMOUTH BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
TERRYVILLE HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA
33 NORTH HARWINTON AVENUE
TERRYVILLE, CT 06786

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2023

7:00 P.M.

MINUTES

Present: Mr. Seaman, Mrs. Kulesa, Mrs. Lucian, Mr. Showers, Ms. Tilton, Mr. Foote,
Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani, Mr. Perugino and Mr. Zbuska

Also Present: Mr. Falcone, Superintendent, Mrs. Melillo, Assistant Superintendent, Mrs. Mozak-Pezza,
Director of Curriculum and Instruction and Mr. Tencza, Business Manager

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1. **Call to Order & Pledge to the Flag**

Mr. Seaman called the regular meeting of the Board of Education to order at 7 p.m. The group joined in the Pledge to the Flag.

2. **Adoption of the Agenda**

MOTION: To entertain a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. Motion Mr. Showers, second Mr. Foote, any discussion, all in favor, any opposed, any abstentions, motion carries.

3. **Approval of Minutes**

MOTION: To entertain a motion to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of the Plymouth Board of Education of August 16, 2023 and the Regular Meeting of the Plymouth Board of Education of August 16, 2023. Motion Mrs. Lucian, second Mr. Showers, any discussion, all in favor, any opposed, any abstentions, motion carries.

4. **Student Representatives**

Jacob Darrell – President, Student Council

- * September 7, Terryville High School Open House
- * Music Department thriving compared to last year
- * Friends of Music held an event over the summer to raise money (potato both at the fair)
- * Band camp teaches students the basics of marching
- * Mum Parade
- * Big "E"

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- * UMass Band Day
- * Berkshire League Music Festival
- * Color Guard Practice
- * Disney Trip was a success
- * Half days of school last week went smoothly for the most part

Kristian Kwoczala Vice President, Student Council

- * September 5 – Terryville High School Class hosted Senior Sunrise
- * Majority of seniors are taking internships

Mark Lussier – Secretary/Treasurer, Student Council

- * His goal is to make communication his top priority
- * He has participated in morning announcements
- * Student life has become much more in tune (normal start to the school year)
- * September 20 - Class officer elections

Question: Mr. Perugino – Inquired of Jacob if the band was marching in the Big “E” on Connecticut Day.

Response: Jacob – Not sure. The date is September 29th

Comments: Mr. Perugino & Mrs. Kulesa – Glad to see representatives from the Student Council participating on the Board. What can the Board do to help? Representatives were told not to be afraid to come and bring things they may perceive are slightly negative to the Board as they are open to hearing it. Asked if they could reach out to students who are not in a leadership position to bring forth to the Board the voice of all students. The Board would love to hear opinions from those students who are less involved.

Mr. Falcone – Informed the Board of his meeting with Mr. Hults and Mr. Nave and shared the Board’s request to have a more open dialogue of what is happening in school. Mr. Hults and Mr. Nave indicated they will transition the student representatives regarding the Board’s request as the year progresses.

5. Public Comment (limited to 3-minutes per speaker)

Barbara Rockwell, 70 Bemis Street, Terryville
Dan Gentile, 227 Mt. Tobe Road, Plymouth

Both Wished Mr. Seaman a Happy 50th Birthday and presented him with a cake.

6. Superintendent’s Update

(a) Beginning of a new school year

- * Interesting start to the school year with the heat and humidity
- * Great opening. Buildings looked phenomenal inside and out. Minimal bus issues and delays. Faculty and staff energized to be back. But most importantly, our students are excited to be back.
- * A thank you to everyone who worked throughout the summer, came back early (teachers and paraprofessionals) to prepare the schools for the students return. Amazing job.

(b) Over the next 2 years

- * The district will focus on the Board’s Goal – Student Achievement. The number one priority being academic experiences for our students, opening up the doors of the high school, providing courses that are engaging for students, looking at the academic experience.

During his attendance at faculty meetings, Mr. Falcone discussed consistent goal setting formats, the use of planning and preparation periods, tweaked focus to bench mark and standardized test scores. Hopefully, minor adjustments that are made could take the district to the next level with test scores. Therefore, the work seen in the classroom can match the test scores.

(c) Litchfield County Superintendent's Meeting of September 8, 2023

Last year the majority of the conversation focused on staffing for non-certified, certified staff and the lack of bus drivers. These concerns continue for some school districts. However, our district is fortunate in that the work the Board did in negotiating and re-negotiating some contracts, it was able to fill the majority of non-certified positions and at this point there is only one certified position that remains open and that is based on a need. There are no concerns with the district's bus company.

(d) Mandates – Unfunded

*Timelines and expenses on districts, i.e. kindergarten September 1st date, keeping students until the age of 22 who have needs. These are all unfunded mandates. Since 2015, not including new mandates out this year, 125 mandates have been placed on public schools. Over an eight-year period, the average is over 15 mandates every year. The district will continue to try to meet these state requirements. However, the district's focus is going to be the four Board Goals: Academic Achievement/ Student Engagement; Well Being; and Fiscal Oversight.

(e) Student Representatives

Student Representatives were welcomed. They were thanked for volunteering to be representatives on the Board and also looking forward to hearing from them.

7. **New Business**

- A. Out of State Field Trips – Due to the sensitivity of the dates, the field trips listed below were previously approved by the Superintendent and were provided as informational items to the Board.

* September 29, 2023 trip to the Big “E”, West Springfield, Massachusetts for 70 Music students in grades 9 – 12 at Terryville High School and 30 grade 8 band students at Terryville High School.

* October 7, 2023 trip to McGuirk Stadium, University of Massachusetts for 68 Music Students in Grades 9 – 12 at Terryville High School.

B. Power/Landscaping Equipment

After a brief discussion, the following motion was made:

MOTION: To entertain a motion to authorize the Business Manager in conjunction with the Superintendent to sell and/or donate the power/landscaping equipment the district no longer is utilizing, as they see necessary. Motion Mr. Foote, second Mr. Perugino, any further discussion, all in favor, any opposed, any abstentions, motion carries.

8. **Unfinished Business**

A. Board of Education Meeting Dates for the Calendar Year 2024

MOTION: To entertain a motion to approve the Plymouth Board of Education Meeting dates for 2024. Motion Mr. Foote, second Mrs. Lucian, any discussion, all in favor, any opposed, any abstentions, motion carries/fails.

B. Board of Education Policies

MOTION: To entertain a motion to approve the Modified Policies; Eliminated Policy and New Policies as submitted. Motion Mrs. Kulesa, second Mr. Perugino, any discussion, all in favor, any opposed, any abstentions, motion carries.

Mr. Seaman appointed Mr. Perugino as chair for the Policy Committee. Dates of meeting will be discussed at a later time.

Mr. Falcone – Policy – 5031- Use of Private Technology Devices

Added language regarding: Cell Phone and Earbuds – To summarize cell phones and earbuds must be away during instructional time. However, they may be used during study halls, lunch and while switching classes. The policy pertains more to the high school. There is no issue at the middle school since student devices are placed in their lockers.

MOTION: To entertain a motion to approve the Modified Policies; Eliminated Policy and New Policies as submitted with the exception of the revised policy Superintendent Falcone just brought that will be considered for a first read. Motion Mrs. Kulesa, second Mr. Foote, any discussion, all in favor, any opposed, any abstentions, motion passes.

After further brief discussions, Mr. Seaman made a call for a vote on the motion and the revised that was just handed out would be first read. All were in favor of the motion as presented, no opposition, no abstentions, motion carries.

9. **Board Member/Committee Reports**

A. **Finance/Operations** - Mr. Tencza, Business Manager

- Included in the packet are the following; Accounts by Facilities Report for August 2023 and 6 different submissions; (1) Business Office Activity Report; (2) Board of Education Budget Summary through August, 2023 Report; (3) Cumulative Total Board of Education Budget % by Month; (4) Food Service Report; (5) Capital Improvement Plan 2021 – 2030 and (6) Monthly Budget Report for August 2023.

Mr. Tencza – Food Services – Down about 50%. At the close of September to pre COVID September to be reviewed.

Mr. Perugino – Item on Activity Report – (e) Replace the cooling coil of air handling unit damaged by frozen pipes. Question: Have we insulated anything? and Page 9 of the Accounts by Facilities Report – Budget - \$188,459 for System Specialist Salary.

Mr. Tencza – The break occurred during a really cold spell and a pipe broke. This was an internal break. Costs were able to be recouped through insurance with the exception of a \$500 deductible. Page 9 of the by Facilities Report regarding the \$188,459 for System Specialist Salary. The district receives money from the town for a portion of this item. Additional budget lines were created.

Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani – Inquired about an update on the van and it is able to be on the road?

Mr. Falcone – He received an email from Ms. Glaser indicating they were taking the students out in the van.

Mr. Tencza – There was a registration issue in that the van was registered under the wrong category. However, this has been corrected. The van is road ready.

- The Accounts by Facilities Reports will be forwarded to the Town of Plymouth Board of Finance

B. **Personnel Report**

No Questions

10. **Public Comment** (limited to 3-minutes per speaker)

Dan Gentile – 227 Mt. Tobe Road, Plymouth – Commented on unfunded mandates and indicated the district is doing a good job.

Barbara Rockwell – 70 Bemis Street, Terryville – Thanked the Board for thinking of the Lions Club for the donated equipment which they have put into use.

11. **Board Liaison Reports**

Mr. Perugino -- Harry S. Fisher Elementary School

Meeting was scheduled for September 12th was cancelled. However, the PTA is meeting tonight, September 13th. Mentioned Angie Suffridge, Principal who was voted into the Maine Hall of Fame Basketball. Hopes to see her participate at Eli Terry Jr. Middle School when they play the Wizards.

Mr. Zbuska -- Plymouth Center School

The PTA Meeting took place approximately one week before school began. The meeting which lasted approximately 15 minutes discussed Open House. The next meeting is scheduled to take place on September 19th.

Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani -- Eli Terry Jr. Middle School & Booster Club

Open House at Eli Terry Jr. Middle School took place on September 12th. PTA purchased sandwiches from Sunrise as a fundraiser and to help parents that were leaving work and going straight to the school. Event went fairly well. Book Fair ends on Friday, September 15th. October 16th Harlem Wizards. Tickets can still be purchased on line. Next meeting is scheduled for September 27th in the library. The PTA is also going to try and offer virtual options.

Mrs. Kulesa -- Terryville High School

She has not received meeting dates yet but will contact Mr. Hults. After the elections, she indicated she would be happy to step down as the Board of Education Liaison for Terryville High School to give someone else on the Board an opportunity to serve since her children are past the high school age. She does not feel as relevant in this role as she was in the past.

Mrs. Kulesa -- EdAdvance

She was not able to attend the last meeting. However, the next meeting is in October which she plans on attending.

12. **Board Comments**

Mr. Showers – The November 8th Board of Education Meeting is the day after elections. Questioned when the Board of Education Members terms end? The swearing in takes place on November 12th, therefore, he feels the meeting should be moved to November 15th.

Mr. Seaman – Indicated he would look into the matter. Correspondence will be sent out to members.

Ms. Tilton – Year has gotten off to a great start. Children are happy to be back. Thanked the new student representatives who attended tonight's meeting. Looking forward to a great year.

Mr. Foote – Great to be back.

Mrs. Kulesa – Happy to be back.

Mrs. Lucian – Beginning of the year is off to a great start.

Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani – One child loved the ½ days off the other not so much.

Mr. Perugino – Glad to hear the school year went off well. Matt, doing a great job.

Mr. Zbuska – Indicated he was impressed with the reports given by the Student Representatives. He felt they did a great job, very articulate and shared much information.

Mr. Seaman – It was nice to see the students. He like the idea of them reaching out to all of the demographics of the student body and bringing their voices forward as well.

Good News – Awarded up to \$250,000 has been approved for the irrigation of the athletic fields. Approval was received from the Board of Finance and it went to the Town Council for final approval which was approved. Mr. Falcone and Mr. Tencza along with others are working on a request for proposals and a design to go out. He thanked all of those agencies and everyone involved for thinking of the district. Again, it's that time of year, election year. He is proud of the Board because they are not political. The Board has donated equipment to the Lion's Club, who in turn help the Board when needed. We are all working together as a town. This is important no matter what party one belongs to. It is important we are doing the right thing for the school system. He is proud to see this because this was not always the case and is happy to see the change. He would like to continue to see this moving forward.

13. **Next Board Meeting** –The next regular meeting of the Plymouth Board of Education will be on Wednesday, October 11, 2023 at 7 p.m. in the cafeteria at Terryville High School.

14. **Adjournment**

MOTION: To entertain a motion to adjourn 7:30 p.m. Motion Mr. Showers, second, Mrs. Lucian, all in favor, motion carries.


Patricia Piskorski
Recording Secretary
Plymouth Board of Education