

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7

NEWBURY LIBRARY-MEDIA CENTER

Board of Education Meeting

August 23, 2023 – 6:00 p.m.

APPROVED 9.13.2023

PRESENT: Chair Ms. Molly Sexton Read (B), Vice-Chair Mr. Robert Jerram (NH), Secretary/Treasurer Mr. Noel Gauthier (NH), Ms. Deborah Bell (N), Ms. Kim Crone (N), Lisa Fragale(C), Ms. Terri Kenneson (C), Ms. Mary Duran (B), Superintendent Mr. Steven K. LePage, Director of Finance & Operations Mr. James Gaskins, Middle School Principal Fran Amara, High School Principal Gary Franklin.

ABSENT: None.

CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Sexton Read called the Regular Board of Education meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

PUBLIC PORTION: None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION BY Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Mr. Jerram, to **APPROVE** July 12, 2023, Regular Board of Education Meeting, as presented: **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Duran, Ms. Bell, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Crone. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** Ms. Fragale. **MOTION PASSED.**

REPORTS

MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL FRAN AMARA

New Teacher Orientation: The Staff Orientation was today, Wednesday, 8/23, beginning at 8:00 a.m. Principal Franklin, Superintendent LePage, and Principal Amara set the stage about what Northwestern was all about, how students and families come first, and how emotions matter, which led to communicating the basic structures of the school. The new staff went on to meet the Student Support Team, the Technology Team, and members of the NTA Union. Lastly, Lindsay Blanchard and Stacy Zematis guided all through the QPR training, which is the suicide prevention training.

Professional Development Plan for Monday, 8/28, and Tuesday, 8/29: Convocation begins at 8:00 a.m. with Superintendent LePage, followed by various professional development opportunities on Monday and Tuesday. Some professional development includes Bloodborne Pathogens, setting up PowerSchool for grade books, and Dr. Carvalho will present an overview of Special Education at NWR7-Continuum of services, IEP at a glance, PPT reporting form, and areas for growth.

Opening of Middle School, including 7th grade orientation: The 7th graders have been visiting the schools and trying the lockers. They walk through the hallways with their parents/grandparents to prepare for the first day of school. On Tuesday, 8/29, the 7th graders return for a 7th-grade orientation that involves a dynamic assembly, small group activities, and a school-wide scavenger hunt. The web leaders will wear tie-dye shirts to “stand out” during the school day to assist all students in need.

HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL GARY FRANKLIN

9th-Grade Orientation/LINK Crew training: LINK Crew training was this week. The LINK Crew called the Freshman at home to invite all to the 9th-grade orientation. The 9th graders are dropped off in front of the small gym, enter the gym, and there is music, cheering, and high-fiving to get the students ready for the school year.

New Student Orientation (10th-12th Grade): The new student orientation happens after the 9th grade orientation. There are eight new students for grades 10-12 for the 2023-2024 school year. Principal Franklin visited, introduced himself, and spoke with parents and students.

Upcoming High School student activities: Senior sunrise breakfast happens on 8/24. This is a breakfast at 5:45 a.m. for all the incoming seniors. Fall sports are beginning this week with practices and parent meetings. Looking ahead, the High School Open House is Thursday, September 14, 2023. The Middle School Open House is Tuesday, September 12, 2023. Spirit Week is from 9/25 to 9/29, with the school dance on 9/30.

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Superintendent LePage thanked the Principals for their reports and explained that working closely with Principal Franklin and Principal Amara throughout the summer has been rewarding and collaborative. Superintendent LePage expressed he hit the “principal lottery” with Principal Amara and Principal Franklin.

Continued Community Outreach/Connections: Superintendent LePage has continued to meet with many community leaders, first selectmen, area superintendents, Attorney Mark Sommaruga, Winchester Police Chief Ciucci, Region 5 Emergency Management Team members, and many teachers who have stopped in to say hello. He continues to be impressed by everyone and everything he has experienced. He looks forward to meeting the entire staff team at Convocation on Monday and all the students next Wednesday. Superintendent LePage's goal is to lead collaboratively and cooperatively, so having strong partners is essential. He is confident that he has strong partners with whom to collaborate across Region 7.

Administrative Summit Overview: Superintendent LePage hosted his first Region 7 administrative team summit on Tuesday, August 15, at the Colebrook Town Hall. It was a very positive and, from all accounts, successful day filled with relationship and team building, reflection on district guideposts such as the Strategic Plan, Vision of the Graduate and Theories of Action, shared professional learning based on two books he recently read, *Chatter: The Voice in Our Head, Why it Matters, and How to Harness It*, by Ethan Kross; and *Think Again, The Power of Knowing What You Don't Know*, by Adam Grant, and finally, a discussion about goal setting for the coming year. The team ended the day with a challenge - coming up with the leadership mantra/credo/ charge to capture the collective leadership focus... **"LET'S GO!"** (coined after a favorite expression by Principal Franklin...and, of course, Superintendent LePage's favorite QB Tom Brady). It is still in a working draft form, but below is the acrostic that the talented and creative leadership team came up with:

L
E
T
S
G
O
!
L
E
A
D
I
N
G
L
E
A
R
N
I
N
G
F
O
R
A
L
E
X
P
E
C
T
I
N
G
E
X
C
E
L
L
E
N
C
E
T
H
I
N
K
I
N
G
T
H
O
U
G
H
T
F
U
L
L
Y
'S
U
P
P
O
R
T
I
N
G
O
N
E
A
N
O
T
H
E
R

G
R
O
W
I
N
G
A
N
D
L
E
A
R
N
I
N
G
O
P
E
N
I
N
G
O
P
P
O
R
T
U
N
I
T
I
E
S
F
O
R
S
U
C
C
E
S
S
!!!

Welcome and Introduction Letter: Superintendent LePage shared his welcome back and personal introduction letter with all members of the student body, parents/families, staff members, and the Board of Education. He hoped it conveyed enough to give the community a sense of what to expect from him as a person and a leader, along with some supplementary information about the start of the school year.

Bus schedules have been posted to the website as of this previous Monday, with some delay on the Dattco posting. There is a district bus leadership meeting that he will be attending tomorrow at 9:30 a.m., along with James and some business department staff. He will regularly communicate with all stakeholders to provide updates from his district's perspective and to inform and celebrate excellence observed through his observations and interactions. Superintendent LePage will also give information on essential topics and school events. Superintendent LePage plans to monitor and assess feedback from communications over the coming months to strike the right balance with stakeholders. He will also look to the BOE for insight and honest feedback.

Gym Floor Updates: Superintendent LePage shared a full update on the current status of the gymnasium floors and a timeline for these to be completed. This has been a complicated and stressful issue that he has remained close to, working with Keith Boyle, James Gaskins, the CIRMA insurance adjuster, and two flooring installers. NWR7 is now in a good place, but it has been a complex process. Superintendent LePage communicated that he secured a flooring contractor to complete the auxiliary gym and the main gym. The projects will begin the first week of September.

Convocation: Superintendent LePage is excited to welcome all staff members at the Convocation to be held in the cafeteria on Monday, August 28. He will share a personal welcome message, some background on his journey to becoming a Highlander, professional learning points, and some information about goals for the year ahead. He will then turn things over to our professional learning committee leadership, who will share information and learning on several important and timely topics determined by the PDEC committee.

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS JAMES GASKINS

Mr. Gaskins began by expressing he feels hit the Superintendent lottery twice, with the current Superintendent LePage and the former Superintendent Palmer.

Food Service: Mr. Gaskins communicated the cafeteria manager, Wendy Brown, is no longer serving at NWR7, she has taken a different position at EdAdvance. Mr. Gaskins expressed a sincere "thank you" for her dedication and time served at NWR7 and wished her all the best in her new position. Kristin La Mesa-Hamzy was hired as a cafeteria manager. She is a culinary student and is a forward thinker. Mr. Gaskins says he is excited to work with Ms. La Mesa-Hamzy.

Changes in Food Service: Breakfast is FREE for all for the year 2023-2024. Lunches will be tiered as PAID, REDUCED, and FREE with the changes in the REDUCED. The REDUCED will currently also be FREE for the school year.

Mr. Gaskins explained that with the pandemic money received over the past few years, NWR7 was able to purchase two new ovens for the kitchen and two new serving lines.

Facilities: Getting the Buildings ready for school: Mr. Gaskins explained the audit is starting, and projects are happening all around the school. There is a lot of repair and maintenance. At the PE department's request and Principal Franklin's request, the wall was removed between the weight room and the aerobics room. A new floor in this expanded area is being completed over the August 26 weekend. The tile flooring placed in the Middle School a few years ago was put down in House 1 and House 2 in the High School and the center common areas. Mr. Gaskins explained that there is tremendous work to clean the rugs and flooring over the summer months. The custodians have to move all the furniture in each classroom, clean each area, and the floors are stripped of the wax and then rewaxed with 2-3 coats of polish. The hallways have 4 to 5 coats of polish. The pavers were placed outside the gym area. Mr. Gaskins explained that there is a tremendous amount of maintenance and projects that the custodial staff are responsible for over the summer months, and he would like to thank Keith Boyle and the entire custodial staff for all their hard work and dedication to make the school look fabulous for the start of the school year.

OLD BUSINESS

Updates: None

BOE Goals: None

NEW BUSINESS

NEW HIRE REPORT - additions since 7/12/2023 BOE Meeting

Sharon Ashley Roberts – Special Education Teacher HS

Replacing Christine Kersten, who resigned on 7/11/2023

BA Fine Arts University of Hartford, West Hartford, CT

Masters of Special Education- University of Hartford, West Hartford, CT

6th Year Administration Supervision /Educational Leadership Central CT State

University, New Britain, CT

CORRESPONDENCE

None.

OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO SPEAK ON AGENDA ITEMS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Ms.Crone, seconded by Mr. Gauthier, to **ADJOURN** the meeting at 6:36 p.m. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Duran, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Kenneson. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

Next Regular Board of Education Meeting: September 13, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Barrett
Board Clerk