

Coventry Board of Education
Coventry, Connecticut

Board of Education Regular Meeting
Unapproved Minutes of Thursday, February 8, 2024
Administration Building Conference Room

Board Members Present:

Jennifer Beausoleil, Chairperson
Eugene Marchand, Vice Chairperson
Mary Kortmann, Secretary (via remote)
Emma Eaton
Courtney Rossignol
Christina Williams
Joseph Cleary

Board Members Absent:

None

Administrators Present:

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

Also Present:

Mya Ransford, Student Board of Education Representative

Audience: Michele Mullaly, Director of Teaching and Learning; Ms. Wilbur, Teaching and Learning; Mr. Parker, Teacher; Ms. Amand, Grade 9 Science Teacher; Students Kylie Marcotte, Dylan Murphy, Ava Halstead, Emma Cwalina. Dr. Lois Hasty, Preschool & Early Childhood Education Coordinator; Heidi Davis, CGS Principal. Dr. Beth Giller, PSSS Director.

I. Call to Order

J. Beausoleil called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. Salute to the Flag

J. Beausoleil led the salute to the flag.

III. Audience of Citizens

Elizabeth Bauch, Seagraves Rd – invited the Board and administrators to an event in partnership between the Town of Coventry Human Services Department and herself. The Resource Fair will be on 3/6/24 from 6-7:30pm in the Community Room at the Booth and Dimock Library. This is a free event for Coventry families who have children with special needs.

IV. Report of the Superintendent

Dr. Petrone reported on various events taking place in-district and regionally. He toured all the facilities with the new town manager and finance director to see the challenges facing the facilities. Focus groups are starting. Dr. Petrone attended the CAFE legislative breakfast in Somers. Administrators continue to work on belief statements. Half day PD conducted. Facilities vision shared with Middle school and High school staff, next it will be shared with the other school sites.

IV.A. Information: Science Performance Tasks and Formative Assessments (Goal 1.1) Ms. Wilbur

Dr. Petrone introduced Ms. Wilbur, who shared a presentation on science performance tasks and formative assessments, which is available on the district's website via the BoardBook portal. Students shared tasks they perform in class.

J. Beausoleil stated her excitement to see presenters are young ladies, and very articulate.

IV.B. Information: Board of Education Student Representative Report

Miss Ransford reported on happenings taking place at the high school including basketball senior nights happening, AP seminars submitted research papers, and AP US history class dressed up as progressive performers and gave speeches on who they dressed up as.

J. Beausoleil stated the AP History event was a great way to start conversations about history.

E. Marchand asked for more information on the event. He agreed this was a great way to study the subject matter.

V. Vote: Consent Agenda

V.A. Approve the CHS May 2024 Field Experience to New York, NY

V.B. Accept the Retirement of Lisa McLean, CNH Teacher

V.C. Accept the Retirement of Heather McPeck, CGS Teacher

E. Eaton asked that all consent agenda items be removed from the consent agenda for discussion.

MOTION: To approve the CHS May 2024 Field Experience to New York, NY

By: E. Eaton

Seconded: G. Marchand

Discussion: E. Eaton stated this is a fantastic trip. Asked that the paperwork address the spelling error of the museum.

Result: Motion passes unanimously

MOTION: To accept the Retirement of Lisa McLean, CNH Teacher

By: E. Eaton

Seconded: J. Cleary

Discussion: E. Eaton wished Ms. McLean the best and stated that it takes a special person to do what she does.

Result: Motion passes unanimously

MOTION: To accept the Retirement of Heather McPeck, CGS Teacher

By: E. Eaton

Seconded: G. Marchand

Discussion: E. Eaton stated Ms. McPeck has been in this district for 25 years and is an anchor to the second grade, as well as an asset. She wishes her the best.

Result: Motion passes unanimously

VI. Report of the Chairman

J. Beausoleil reported there will be a joint BOE Fiscal and Town Council meeting on 2/12/24 at 7pm at Town Hall. This meeting is held quarterly. Community members can attend. The Board of Education will present to Town Council on 3/11/24 at the annex to discuss budget and capital requests. On 2/29/24 at 5pm there will be a Board professional development opportunity. CABE legislative breakfast held, this was a regional meeting so that board members can talk to legislative members.

C. Rossignol asked about the status of reading for smaller districts. Dr. Petrone stated we received a conditional waiver. J. Beausoleil discussed the matter further.

VII. Communications

There were none.

VIII. VOTE: Approval of Minutes

VIII.A. Approve Minutes of January 25, 2024

E. Eaton amended the minutes for January 25, 2024 item VII.A. with her abstaining.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of January 25, 2024 as amended

By: G. Marchand

Seconded: E. Eaton

Result: Motion passes unanimously

IX. Old Business

IX.A. Information: FY25 Budget

J. Beausoleil reported the transmittal memo was submitted. Planning dates also submitted.

CABE held a webinar on the governor's proposed budget which has some effect on revenues. Some items included in the budget are; not cutting the educational reform package, a shift in magnet tuition cap being proposed, school meals funding and professional development included and proposed house bills reviewed. A public hearing on education pieces being held on 2/15/24 at 2pm.

X. New Business

X.A. Information: Kindergarten Age Requirement Presentation – Dr. Hasty and Ms. Davis

Dr. Petrone gave some background information on the new requirement. Research supports this change, and we feel we have a good screener in place. BOE presentation and parents/guardians meeting to review process will be Tuesday, 2/13/24.

Dr. Hasty and Ms. Davis shared a presentation on kindergarten age requirements, which is available on the district's website via the BoardBook portal.

Dr. Petrone stated there will be extensive communication to parents. He anticipates 17 students not qualifying. The cap for the transition class will be 18. This process has been refined and reviewed by many.

J. Beausoleil appreciated the district not waiting for the State Department of Education to provide something for screening. Asked for the pamphlet to include dates for the presentation for registration and assessment. Dr. Petrone stated every student currently at Nathan Hale will have guaranteed admittance.

C. Rossignol asked for specifics on the lottery. Dr. Petrone explained it will only be non-Hale kids that would be entered into the lottery if there are seats available. Assessment process reviewed. SEL portion discussed.

C. Williams asked about assessments and advanced students. Also, how will we, with the metrics, decide if a child can go to kindergarten. Dr. Petrone stated in his experience he has not historically experienced skipping grades at the elementary level.

E. Marchand asked if the transition classroom tuition will be the same as Hale tuition. Dr. Petrone stated he doesn't want a child not to be able to attend preschool because of financial difficulty, therefore they would implement the sliding scale. Transportation piece would remain the same.

J. Cleary asked if the district has looked at covering the cost of transportation. Dr. Petrone stated that there has been conversation around this.

E. Eaton asked about assessments for bur babies. Stated she is glad we are waiting to do assessments until later in the spring.

C. Rossignol asked about the transportation plan and influx in traffic. Dr. Petrone does not think this will be problematic, he also stated there will not be before and after care.

C. Williams asked about preschool tuition revenue. Dr. Petrone stated that is not an incentive. C. Williams asked the district to consider a one-year waiver.

M. Ransford asked if the transition program students could become too far ahead. Dr. Petrone stated there is always the instance where a student could excel.

Consensus on Board to have Dr. Petrone evaluate and investigate the transportation capacity for transition program students.

MOTION: To modify the agenda to add discussion and possible action to vote to allow district waivers for early entrance to kindergarten

By: C. Williams

Seconded: C. Rossignol

Result: MOTION PASSES 5-2-0 (M. Kortmann and G. Marchand opposed)

X.B. Information: District Waivers for Early Entrance to Kindergarten

C. Williams stated that she firmly believes the parent is best to decide if their child should start kindergarten.

MOTION: To approve the district grant a one-year waiver for all families who request early entrance to kindergarten

By: C. Williams

Seconded: C. Rossignol

Discussion on any barriers. Discussion on transition class. M. Kortmann stated this would only alleviate the problem this year, it would still move the problem to next year. Dr. Petrone stated if parents asked for the waiver for early entrance, they would not go through the full screener process. C. Williams stated that this will give parents for 5 year olds next year time to plan.

Result: MOTION PASSES 5-1-1 (M. Kortmann opposed, J. Beausoleil abstained)

XI. Report of Board Members

XI.A. Information: Transportation Committee Report, Meetings of January 25 and February 8, 2024

E. Marchand reviewed the Transportation Committee meeting stating they are finalizing the contract in the next few weeks until some questions are clarified. The contract will come to the board for final vote soon.

XI.B. Information: District Wellness Committee Liaison Report, Meeting of February 7, 2024

C. Rossignol reviewed the Wellness Committee meeting and reported they created a poster board they will use for STEAM night.

XI.C. Information: Fiscal Committee Report, Meeting of February 8, 2024

E. Eaton reviewed the Fiscal Committee meeting held earlier in the evening. The special education deficit is larger than anticipated. Auditorium lighting ordered. Remaining funds from CHS freshman basketball team has not been expended at this time. Air quality

evaluation discussed. An RFP will be sent out to see what the cost may be. Dr. Petrone will ask for a one-year waiver for the air quality inspection.

XII. Possible VOTE: Executive Session [Superintendent’s Evaluation]

MOTION: Pursuant to CGS-1-200(c)(6)(A), the Board of Education will go into Executive Session for discussions related to Superintendent’s evaluation with the Superintendent present at 9:08 p.m.

By: C. Williams

Seconded: J. Cleary

Result: Motion carries unanimously

XIII. Open Session

The Board of Education returned to Open Session at 9:28 p.m.

XIV. Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 9:29 p.m.

By: E. Eaton

Seconded: C. Williams

Result: Motion passes unanimously

Respectfully Submitted:

Tricia Dean
Board Clerk

Approved: _____