

Coventry Board of Education
Coventry, Connecticut

Board of Education Regular Meeting
Approved Minutes of Thursday, March 14, 2024
Administration Building Conference Room

Board Members Present:

Jennifer Beausoleil, Chairperson
Mary Kortmann, Secretary
Joseph Cleary
Emma Eaton
Courtney Rossignol
Christina Williams

Board Members Absent:

Eugene Marchand, Vice Chairperson

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: Mr. Sward, CNH Principal; Mr. Blake, CHS Principal; Ms. DeRagon, Robertson School Principal; Ms. Davis, CGS Principal

I. Call to Order

J. Beausoleil called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

II. Salute to the Flag

J. Beausoleil led the salute to the flag.

III. Audience of Citizens

Peter DePaola, 82 Wall Street, spoke regarding the upcoming budget planning. He asked the Board to consider staffing and transportation reductions. He would like to see a budget that is passable, and for the Board to focus on the things that are absolutely needed.

IV. Report of the Superintendent

Dr. Petrone reported that the Read Across America day was a big success. The special education fair was held at the Dimock Library. Good Man Charlie Brown play at the high school was wonderful. On 3/7/24 food services did a taste test. Locally grown resources were provided by Lebanon Farm. The kindergarten age requirement meeting had a large

turnout. Budget hearing was held at the high school. The next budget meeting will be held in April. Friday was an early release day for professional development. Thanked the Board members who came out to support him at the UConn event.

J. Beausoleil stated it was an honor to join Dr. Petrone at the UConn Alumni awards event. Where he received the Outstanding Superintendent Award.

IV.A. Recognition: March – Board of Education Appreciation Month

Dr. Petrone expressed thanks to the Board for working incredibly hard for the district. Students Shelby, Tenley, Juliana, Alaina, Caiden, and Mya presented gifts to the Board.

IV.B. Recognition: CNH Girls Basketball Team – Northeast Middle School Athletic Conference Champions

Dr. Petrone introduced the Northeast Middle School Athletic Conference Champions. They had a perfect 12-0 record. Dr. Petrone recognized all the hard work of the team. Mr. Sward thanked the athletes. Coach Rogers stated the athletes hard work paid off. She mentioned that JV also has a 10-0 record. Coach Rogers also noted that 90% of the team members achieved honor roll.

IV.C. Information: Board of Education Student Representative Report – Mya Ransford

Miss Ransford reported that the boys' basketball team will be playing at the finals on 3/17/24 at 3pm at Mohegan Sun. Portfolio night will be on 3/20/24.

C. Williams asked for an update on senior activities such as prom.

IV.D. Information: Presentation – A Comprehensive System of Student Supports (Goal 2.1)

Dr. Petrone introduced the administrative team who shared a presentation on comprehensive system of student supports, which is available on the district's website via the BoardBook portal.

J. Cleary asked about the process of identifying tiers. Ms. Davis explained they meet as a team to develop a plan.

V. Report of the Chairman

J. Beausoleil reported the Town Council held a Q&A on the budget. Steam night coming up, the Board meeting will be moved to 7:30 pm that night to accommodate attendees. The Q&A for the kindergarten waiver process was well attended. J. Beausoleil mentioned that the area business in town are amazing. They have donated materials and services generously. The negotiation process in underway for unions. Today is Pi day.

VI. Communications

There were none.

VII. Vote: Approval of Minutes

VII.A. Approve Special Meeting Minutes of February 29, 2024 (5:30 p.m.)

MOTION: To approve the special meeting minutes of February 29, 2024

By: E. Eaton

Seconded: M. Kortmann

Result: Motion passes unanimously

VII.B. Approve Regular Meeting Minutes of February 29, 2024

MOTION: To approve the regular meeting minutes of February 29, 2024

By: E. Eaton

Seconded: M. Kortmann

Result: Motion passes unanimously

VIII. Old Business

VIII.A. Information and Possible Vote: FY2025 Budget

J. Beausoleil stated that the bottom-line number has not been set by Town Council yet, therefore there will not be a vote tonight. On 4/1 or 4/4 there may be a vote on numbers for referendum. We do anticipate a cut.

E. Eaton pointed out that the 2% fund can hold up to 2% of the budget, however it is not currently near that amount.

IX. New Business

IX.A. Discussion and VOTE: Approve the 2024-25 School Calendar

Dr. Petrone stated the calendar has been vetted with administration, teachers, and PTO. This calendar also aligns with EASTCONN's calendar. November days off and Open House reviewed.

C. Williams would like to see report cards received by parents before conferences.

Discussion on early release and professional development days.

MOTION: To approve the 2024-25 School Calendar

By: E. Eaton

Seconded: M. Kortmann

Discussion: Board members would like to get the draft calendar to review and discuss before the meeting to vote on the calendar. J. Beausoleil will make a note to put it on the agenda earlier next year for discussion.

**Result: 5 in favor, 1 opposition C. Rossignol, 1 abstention J. Cleary,
Student representative voted in favor.**

IX.B. Discussion: Review of Policies – First Reading (To Be Warned for a vote a future meeting.)

IX.B.1. Discussion: Review NEW Draft Policy

a. NEW 5112 Admission to the Public Schools at or Before Age Five

E. Eaton: this policy states for this academic year the students born by January 1st can enter kindergarten with a waiver. They do not have to pass the assessment.

Discussion on the verbiage being confusing.

This policy will be sent back to the committee for further review.

IX.B.2. Discussion: Review of Policy Revisions

a. 1231 Non-Discrimination – Community

E. Eaton: revised based on statute changes

Consensus to move forward for vote at the next meeting.

b. 1330 Use of School Facilities

E. Eaton: changes to the fee schedule deadline

Consensus to move forward for vote at the next meeting.

c. 4110 Employment and Student Teacher Checks

E. Eaton: CT statute requires notice in clear language

Consensus to move forward for vote at the next meeting.

d. 4116.1 Non-Discrimination – Personnel

E. Eaton: language change and protected class citizens added

Consensus to move forward for vote at the next meeting.

e. 4116.35 Child Abuse Neglect and Sexual Assault Reporting

E. Eaton: language changes

Consensus to move forward for vote at the next meeting.

f. 4151.2 Family and Medical Leave

E. Eaton: aligns with federal regulations

Consensus to move forward for vote at the next meeting.

g. 5122.2 Non-Discrimination – Students

E. Eaton: update to protected classes

Consensus to move forward for vote at the next meeting.

h. 5127 Graduation Requirements

E. Eaton: amends credit requirements.

C. Williams requested to specify credits between grades 8-12.

Discussion on sending this policy forward and then do a revision at a later date.

E. Eaton stated that the changes here are legal and statute related and suggests sending the policy forward with these changes, while concurrently looking at making additional revisions.

A vote on consensus to send this policy back to committee.

C. Williams, J. Cleary, C. Rossignol voted in favor of sending policy back to committee. Consensus FAILED. Moves forward for vote at the next meeting.

i. 5127.1 Improve Completion Rates of FAFSA

E. Eaton: updated with new FAFSA requirements

C. Williams stated she is not in favor of this although she realized it's a state mandated law. She believes an-opt out should be included.

Discussion on where the financial information gets sent. The district does not maintain the data, College Board does.

Consensus to move forward for vote at the next meeting.

j. 5131.7 Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy

E. Eaton: revised to add definition of discrimination and harassment.

Consensus to move forward for vote at the next meeting.

k. 5131.71 School Safe Climate Plan

Consensus to move forward for vote at the next meeting.

l. 5141.4 Management Plan and Guidelines for Students with Food Allergies and/or Glycogen Storage Disease

E. Eaton: providing clarity and to reflect gender neutral language.

Consensus to move forward for vote at the next meeting.

m. 5142.2 Suicide Prevention and Intervention

E. Eaton: complies with regulations for current legislation requirements.

Dr. Petrone stated there is a crisis team at school. Clarification on how risk is assessed.

Consensus to move forward for vote at the next meeting.

n. 5144 Student Discipline

E. Eaton: language updated

C. Williams asked why this policy reflects leniency. Dr. Petrone stated this only states the threshold.

Discussion on type of discipline for certain acts against policy.

Consensus to move forward for vote at the next meeting.

o. 5146 Recess and Play-Based Learning – formally titled Physical Activity, Undirected Play, and Student Discipline

E. Eaton: new public act required for pre-k and kindergarten

C. Williams has two content issues regarding the no limit on additional time for undirected play, would like to see a cap on the additional time. Also language that it may include electronic devices. Would like to strike that language.

E. Eaton explained that she feels that limiting time does not benefit the concept of play based learning, and the technology piece can be helpful for some activities.

Discussion on the Board about time and technology during play based learning.

J. Beausoleil asked if there is consensus to send the policy back to committee.

5 in opposition with 1 in favor by C. Williams

Policy will move forward for vote at the next meeting.

C. Williams stated there are 6 votes and earlier the vote was 3/3

J. Beausoleil stated consensus is not a vote, it means unanimous not majority. Consensus is everyone. She stated she worded so it would go forward

C. Williams asked for the legal definition of consensus.

J. Beausoleil stated agreement by the entire body

C. Williams asked for a point of order. We did not have an entire body that pushed it forward on the previous item.

J. Beausoleil: Because I said do we have consensus to send it back, I did not say consensus to bring it forward.

C. Williams: but then it doesn't go forward

J. Beausoleil: I said do we have consensus to send it back, we did not, which means the opposite of that.

C. Williams: but you don't have consensus to bring it forward. Point of order. What are the Robert rule of order for this?

J. Beausoleil: the beauty of point of order is it's ruled by me not Dr. Petrone

C. Williams: You ruled on the last one incorrectly and we had to get legal review.

MOTION: J. Beausoleil: asked for a motion to add a vote on whether to send this item to a regular meeting for a second hearing.

C. Williams: Clarified if she is adding a motion to put forward a vote?

J. Beausoleil: yes

By: M. Kortmann Seconded: E. Eaton

Result: 3 in favor and 3 oppositions by C. Williams, J. Cleary, C. Rossignol

This will go back to committee for further review

J. Cleary stated J. Beausoleil worded something specifically to benefit her, and basically told Mary to vote.

J. Beausoleil: so it will go back to committee, it's binary, there's no third option. This will go back to committee.

C. Williams asked for point of order on the graduation item. There was not consensus to go forward.

J. Beausoleil: how point of order works is it has to happen when the item is up for discussion, you can't go back in time.

C. Williams: I disagree, it has to be within the same meeting.

J. Beausoleil: reviewed Robert's rule of order. Cannot find a section that clarifies that.

J. Beausoleil stated 5127 graduation requirements will go back to committee (item IX.B.2 (h))

p. 6146.1 Weighted Grading and Calculation of Grade Point Averages

E. Eaton: update provided by CSDE.

Discussion on obtaining GPA before the end of the year for planning purposes.

Consensus to move forward for vote at the next meeting.

q. 6160.1 Parental Access to Instructional Material

E. Eaton: updated to comply with Act 23-160

Consensus to move forward for vote at the next meeting.

r. 7100 New Construction Planning

Consensus to move forward for vote at the next meeting.

s. 9360 Construction and Posting of Agenda

E. Eaton: changes pursuant to FOIA

Consensus to move forward for vote at the next meeting.

X. Report of Board Members

X.A. Information: Fiscal Committee Report, Meeting of March 14, 2024 – M. Kortmann and Mr. Carroll

K. Kortmann reviewed the Fiscal Committee meeting held on 3/14/24. Reported line items that are over budget.

C. Williams asked how many vacancies there are districtwide. Dr. Petrone estimated four paraprofessionals and one electrician.

XI. 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 discussion related to Superintendent’s evaluation at 9:50 p.m.

By: C. Rossignol

Seconded: E. Eaton

Result: Motion carries unanimously

XII. Open Session

The Board returned to Open Session at 10:20 p.m.

XIII. Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 10:20 p.m.

By: E. Eaton

Seconded: C. Williams

Result: Motion passes unanimously

Respectfully Submitted:

Tricia Dean
Board Clerk

Approved: April 11, 2024