

**Regular Meeting
March 16, 2021**

Opening

Call to Order

At 7:06 p.m. School Board President Michael Marasco called the March 16, 2021, Caesar Rodney School District regular meeting to order.

Roll Call

Members present in addition to President Marasco were Vice President Ms. Jessica Marelli, Board Members, Mr. Dave Failing, Dr. Joyce Denman, and Executive Secretary Dr. Kevin Fitzgerald. Mr. P. Scott Wilson was not present.

Adoption of Agenda

Ms. Marelli made a motion to adopt the March 16, 2021 agenda as presented. Mr. Failing seconded the motion and after roll call, the motion carried 4-0 with one absent (Marasco, Marelli, Failing, and Denman).

Approval of the Minutes:

- February 16, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes
- March 2, 2021 Special Meeting Minutes
- February 26, 2021, March 2, 2021, March 9, 2021 Work Session Meetings Minutes

Dr. Denman made a motion to approve the February 16, 2021, Regular Meeting Minutes, March 2, 2021, Special Meeting Minutes, February 26, 2021, March 2, 2021, March 9, 2021, Work Session Meetings Minutes. Ms. Marelli seconded the motion. The motion carried 4-0 (Marasco, Marelli, Failing, and Denman).

Recognitions

1. Sophia Clayton was presented with the Spirit of Caesar Rodney Student Award.
2. Jada McCullough was recognized for being selected for the 2021 McDonald's All-American Girls Basketball team.
3. Carrie Bush & Lauren Boulden were presented with the Spirit of Caesar Rodney Staff Awards.
4. Janice Yearick was presented with the Spirit of Caesar Rodney Staff Award.
5. Brian Berns was recognized for being selected the DIFCA 2020-2021 Assistant Football Coach of the Year.
6. Allen Frear Elementary School was recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School.

The Board took a brief recess to take photographs of those recognized this evening.

Presentations

Allen Frear Elementary School Principal, Mrs. Julie Lavender, and Assistant Principal, Mrs. Barb Miklus, gave a video presentation highlighting the moments they have shared with their students so far this school year.

Communications

Superintendent

- Dr. Fitzgerald congratulated all of our the Spirit of Caesar Rodney Award winners, the staff and students of Allen Frear for being recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School, and Brian Berns for his contributions over the last 40 years.
- Dr. Fitzgerald congratulated our student-athletes. Jada McCullough was just named to the All-Henlopen Conference Northern Team today along with her teammate Stacey Deputy and Alexis Jordan. Named to the All-Henlopen Northern Boys Team were Brycen Williams, Jaelin Joyner, and Ryan Carey. He congratulated the Unified Basketball Team for making it to the state semifinals. He also gave a shout-out to Ryan Woodzell & Danielle Stewart who were named Outstanding Male & Female Swimmer at the Henlopen Conference Championship meet.
- Dr. Fitzgerald gave a shout-out to Sage Sawhney, an eighth-grade student at Postlethwait, who is the Delaware State Spelling Bee Champion. He beat 23 outstanding spellers over 14 rounds. We will recognize him at next month's school board meeting.
- Dr. Fitzgerald also congratulated Kevin Hudson and the state champions in the heavyweight division. Kevin is a three-time state champ and he will also be recognized next month.
- Dr. Fitzgerald continued to congratulate the building teachers of the year. He announced each building's Teacher of the Year. He included Lauren Ruskey (CRHS animal science teacher) and Krissy Hall (CRHS counselor) who have been chosen to receive a 2021 Innovative Delaware Educator Award from UD's Horn Entrepreneurship Program. Elise Knable (CRHS ARVED teacher) and Rebecca Sheahan (CRHS animal science teacher) have both been selected as winners of the 2021 Delaware STEM Educator of the Year Award.
- Dr. Fitzgerald shared that we have three NCSN's here in the district: Becky Gravatt, Delane Saxton, and Anne Wearden. The National Board for Certification of School Nurses Requirements are a valid state-issued license as a registered nurse, bachelor's degree (or higher) in nursing, a minimum of 1,000 hours of clinical practice as a school nurse, and successful completion of the National Certification for School Nurses Examination. Mrs. Gravatt and Mrs. Saxton were even out vaccinating people at Dover Downs for four hours on Saturday. He announced that our nurses are the best!
- Dr. Fitzgerald shared with the Board that as part of Postlethwait being named as one of ESPN's TOP five schools in the country some of their unified players will be meeting with Mike Golic, Jr. tomorrow for an ESPN interview. The actual ESPN award will be presented to the school on April 16th.
- Dr. Fitzgerald continued with additional awards. The district won two Cool Schools Challenges for the Polar Bear Plunge and we will have an awards ceremony on March 31st.
- Dr. Fitzgerald shared many of our elementary schools are collecting plastic. They are adding recycled plastic benches to their outside classrooms. Donations of plastic help defray the cost.
- Dr. Fitzgerald informed the Board that we have successfully combined the secondary school "C" cohort with the "A" and "B" cohorts and adjusted the secondary school schedule so we could provide more math support to our students. Dr. Fitzgerald thanked Mr. Jason Bonner, Transportation Supervisor, for his work on bus schedules.
- Dr. Fitzgerald stated we still have not received an answer from the US Department of Education regarding state testing. He shared we cannot stress enough that we believe that the internal assessments such as I-Ready along with the SAT can provide the information required.
- Dr. Fitzgerald shared that we continue to meet with the Department of Public Health and the Governor's Office regarding school next year. The key is the Governor's Executive Order-we are compelled by law to follow that order. We are pleased with opening up vaccine availability. Dr. Fitzgerald stated we are looking at the possibility of doing away with our Wednesday deep cleaning day and what that would involve. We hope to have a plan and presentation for the Board to consider at next Tuesday night's work session. There is planning that needs to take place.
- Dr. Fitzgerald shared the district continues to provide our staff with Compassionate Classroom Training. He thanked Mr. Cliffvon Howell and those teachers who have stepped up to lead those discussions.
- Dr. Fitzgerald informed the Board that we have a 2015 CRHS Alumni heading to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers! Cameron Corbett will intern with the Super Bowl Champions as an athletic trainer after finishing his master's degree at West Chester University.

- Dr. Fitzgerald thanked Mr. Dave Failing, Mrs. Kim Judy, and Mr. Ken Stark for their work on securing the Thomas More School for the Caesar Rodney School District.
- And in closing, Dr. Fitzgerald wished Mr. Marasco a Happy Birthday!

School Board

- President Marasco thanked Dr. Fitzgerald for his communications. He stated we have a lot of good and positive things happening in the district.
- Mr. Failing congratulated the Unified Basketball Team. He stated they have made us very proud. He shared that President Marasco and the Board have been meeting every week for the past year and will continue to do that to get the job done. It has been very challenging but CR has proven themselves over and over again. We have continued to dig deep and meet those challenges. He stated they take the criticism and shared we have a way to go. He is very proud of everything we are doing.
- Ms. Marelli stated she agreed with Mr. Failing. We have been given many challenges and a year ago none of us thought we would be in the position we are today. She is very proud of the staff. And we are really taking strides to get our hybrid students back into the classroom. She included that if she didn't know we were in a pandemic, she would not know it by reading the director's reports. The Curriculum and Instruction report is six pages long and it shows we are doing things that say a lot to push the district forward despite the limitations that were put upon us.
- Dr. Denman simply said, "Wow!" regarding everything Dr. Fitzgerald shared in his communications. She is amazed at all of the recognitions this evening. It does take a lot of hard work. She gave a huge shout-out to all of the Building Teachers of the Year.

Public Comment

1. **Cindy Meisinger-** She stated she has two children in the district. One is in 1st grade and one is in 3rd grade with special needs. She gave a glimpse of their virtual day. She is teaching all lessons. She preps and teaches with the resources she has been given from the teachers. Student Disability Act is not being followed. She stated she couldn't stress her frustration in three minutes. She is depressed, Her 1st grader is left alone while she needs to concentrate her focus on her 3rd grader. She shared that several school districts are back five days a week no and several states are doing the same. She is disappointed in the school board. She asked how do we catch the students up. The world is moving on without them. She feels they are not ready for college and won't catch up to middle school and high school. Their anxiety is up. She stated students simply login every day to get counted, but their focus is not there. They are not paying attention and are not learning.
2. **Clint Brothers-** He appreciates the teachers and board. He stated his father teaches in MD and they are back five days a week. As other districts have gone back, they are working around the limitations and restrictions. He shared we are almost at spring break. We don't know what DPH or Governor is going to do. We are not doing enough to come up with a plan to get back with restrictions in place. He appreciates the work, but we have to do more. He is a father of three in the district. Their mother is home with his children and they are not getting the learning they need. He asked the Board to please do more.
3. **Margaret Conroy-** Thanked the Board for letting her speak. She urged the Board to do everything they can to provide the opportunity to have school every day. She stated that hybrid and most remote learning is hurting many kids. Her son was getting straight A's but is not now. He is depressed and failing all classes. He didn't go out for any sports this year. It is not just her child. She has known students who have tried to commit suicide. She stated the Board needs to do better. Bring students back all week. We need to give the kids interaction with teachers and peers. She referenced this Board meeting and stated this is a good example of how remote learning doesn't work. Some teacher don't even know their students. She continued to state we need inperson labs for science, etc. With more teachers and staff getting vaccinated, we need to get students back in school this year. She asked the Board to make a plan. Other districts are getting around the restrictions. She advised the Board to talk to them.

President Marasco stated it is our task to get the kids back as soon as we can. He has reached out to the governor's office daily to express the frustration. It is his hope with vaccinations, it will help. He stated they hope to get back to normal this spring. He reminded everyone that we are placed under the executive order. The Board is doing everything they can. The Board continues to meet weekly and look at all of the challenges that are brought to them. They appreciate what all parents are going through. They are going through similar things in their own families. He continued to share they are making the best decisions they can. He also shared we hope to move on with the Thomas More School acquisition and help those schools that are overpopulated.

Action Items

Acquisition of the Thomas More School

The Board approved the lease agreement to acquire the Thomas More School building.

Dr. Denman asked about the roof as she didn't see that information listed on the lease. Mrs. Kim Judy, Director of Business and Finance, stated there is a part of the lease agreement that the building be free of leaks and pointing that out on the agreement.

Ms. Marelli made a motion to accept the lease for the Thomas More School property. Dr. Denman seconded the motion and the motion carried 4-0 with one absent (Marasco, Marelli, Failing, and Denman).

Ms. Marelli thanked Mr. Failing for representing the Board during this process. President Marasco agreed and thanked all involved in this process.

Personnel Matters

The Board approved Personnel Matters B1.- B6. as presented on the agenda. Ms. Marelli made a motion to accept personnel matters as presented on the agenda. Dr. Denman seconded the motion and the motion carried 4-0 with one absent (Marasco, Marelli, Failing, and Denman).

1. Teacher Appointments/Resignations/Retirements/Transfers

Name	School	Position	Action
Allison Bittner	DW	School Nurse	Appointment effective August 2021 (1st day of 21-22 SY.)
Janae Jones	CRHS	Mathematics Teacher	Temporary appointment effective 03/01/2021-6/30/2021.
Helen Burland	WRB	Elementary Teacher	Resignation effective end of SY21.
Kristin Hutton	FMS	Art Teacher	Resignation effective end of SY21.
Shelby Parsram	DABM	Special Education Teacher	Resignation effective end of SY21.
Megen Johnston	CRHS	Special Education Teacher	Resignation effective end of SY21.

2. Paraprofessional Appointments/Resignations/Retirements/Transfers

Name	School	Position	Action
Chavez Eaton	CRHS	Paraprofessional	Temporary appointment effective 03/15/2021.
Kathleen Rodgers	DABM	Paraprofessional	Retirement effective end of SY21.

3. Secretarial Appointments/Resignations/Retirements/Transfers

Name	School	Position	Action
Cookie Reed	WRB	Secretary	Resignation effective 3/27/2021.
Kristi Pries	DO	Administrative Secretary	Retirement effective 7/1/2021.

4. Custodial Appointments/Resignations/Retirements/Transfers

Name	School	Position	Action
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Gust Hirvela	MMS	Chief Custodian	Appointment tentatively effective 3/22/2021.
Cheyenne Figgs	WBS	2nd Shift Custodian	Resignation effective 2/22/2021.

5. Child Nutrition Appointments/Resignations/Retirements/Transfers

Name	School	Position	Action
Jennifer Brady	CRHS	3 hour General Worker	Resignation effective 2/25/2021.

6. Extra Duty Recommendations/Resignations

Name	School	Activity	Position	Action
Rosa'Lynn Burton	CRHS	Softball	JV Asst Co-Coach	Recommendation for Spring Sports SY20-21
Art Carney	CRHS	Softball	JV Asst Co-Coach	Recommendation for Spring Sports SY20-21
Kevin Gravatt	CRHS	Varsity Baseball	Volunteer Coach	Recommendation for Spring Sports SY20-21
Steve Campagnini	CRHS	Winter Track & Field	Volunteer Coach	Recommendation for Spring Sports SY20-21
Megan Loder	CRHS	Varsity Softball	Volunteer Coach	Recommendation for Spring Sports SY20-21
Keith McCarthy	CRHS	Varsity Softball	Volunteer Coach	Recommendation for Spring Sports SY20-21
Raykeem Ward	CRHS	Spring Track	Volunteer Coach	Recommendation for Spring Sports SY20-21
Kyle Williamson	CRHS	Spring Track	Volunteer Coach	Recommendation for Spring Sports SY20-21
Jack Dixon	CRHS	Golf	Coach	Recommendation for Spring Sports SY20-21
Carrie Bouchard	CRHS	Softball	Jr Varsity Head Coach	Recommendation for Spring Sports SY20-21
Angel Merced	CRHS	Spring Track	Volunteer Coach	Recommendation for Spring Sports SY20-21

Routine Business

Gifts to Schools

The Board approved Gifts to Schools as presented on the agenda.

Dr. Denman made a motion to approve the Gifts to Schools as presented on the agenda. Mr. Failing seconded the motion and the motion carried 4-0 with one absent (Marasco, Marelli, Failing, and Denman).

The following donations were Board approved:

- a. The Caesar Rodney District Office received the following donations:
 1. 144 containers of disinfecting wipes from Camden Lowes.
 2. Several hygiene supplies from the Hartly Ruritan Club.
 3. 1440 face masks (value \$3,240.00) from Jaykal MedCo.
- b. The J. Ralph McIlvaine Early Childhood Center received 150 books to be shared as part of community outreach from Kids Need To Read, Jessica Payne.
- c. The Caesar Rodney High School received \$500 from the Law Office of Schmittinger & Rodriguez, P.A.
- d. The Caesar Rodney High School received \$500 from Premier Physical Therapy, Tom Windley.
- e. The Allen Frear Elementary School received the following donations:
 1. 75 face shields and 2000 children's face masks from Donate PPE.
 2. Mrs. Scala's "Books in Student's Hands" Donors Choose (Newbery Classroom Library Builder, Kindness Pack, Classroom Library Must-Haves for various grades) from Donors

- Choose.
3. Ms. Rynkowski's "Materials for Hybrid and Virtual Learners" (scissors, colored pencils, dry erase markers, glue, etc.) from Donors Choose.
 4. Mrs. Merkle's "Hit the Deck and Stay Safe During PE" (Giant Foam Rings) from Donors Choose.
 5. Mrs. Gordinier's "Rescue Recess" (Various recess materials for both indoor and outdoor recess that are individualized) from Donors Choose.

Policy Matters

2020-21 School Choice Recommendations

The Board approved the 2020-21 and 2021-22 School Choice as presented on the agenda.

Dr. Denman made a motion to approve the 2020-21 and 2021-22 School Choice as presented on the agenda. Mr. Failing seconded the motion and the motion carried 4-0 with one absent (Marasco, Marelli, Failing, and Denman).

2021-2022 School Calendar

Dr. Tamara Toles-Torain presented the 2021-2022 school calendar based on the recommendations from the calendar committee.

Ms. Marelli thanked Dr. Toles-Torain and the committee for their work. Ms. Marelli also served on this committee and stated Dr. Toles-Torain does a nice job running those committee meetings. She shared there is a lot that goes into this calendar. Dr. Toles Torain brings options to the committee for consideration. Dr. Denman stated it looks great. She asked for clarification on the total hour abbreviations and the amount required. Dr. Toles Torain explained the total hours required and stated we have a cushion for inclement days, etc. She continued to point out that August 24th is the start date for students, the last student day is June 9th, and the last teacher day is June 13th.

Ms. Marelli made a motion to accept the 2021-2022 School Calendar as presented. Mr. Failing seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously 4-0 with one absent (Marasco, Marelli, Failing, and Denman).

Fiscal Matters

Budget/Fiscal Reports

Mrs. Kimberly Judy explained the Budget/Fiscal Reports. President Marasco gave thanks to Mrs. Judy for her great job explaining everything to the Board.

The Board approved the Budget/ Fiscal Reports as presented.

Ms. Marelli made a motion to approve the Budget/Fiscal Reports as presented on the agenda. Mr. Failing seconded the motion and the motion carried 4-0 with one absent (Marasco, Marelli, Failing, and Denman).

Facilities Matters

Mr. Starke explained Facilities Matters as listed on the agenda.

1. The following construction bid was presented for the Board's review and approval:
 - a. David E. Robinson Elementary School- (\$18,243.00) Network switches.
Contractor is Info Solutions, LLC.

Dr. Denman made a motion to approve the Info Solutions, LLC. contract as presented on the agenda. Mr. Failing seconded the motion and the motion carried 4-0 with one absent (Marasco, Marelli, Failing, and Denman).

Directors' Reports

Directors' reports, which include their Supervisors' reports, were included for the Board's review. President Marasco stated the directors are a dream team with the challenging year we have faced.

Magnolia Middle School and the District Realignment

Dr. Michael Noel, Assistant Superintendent/Director of Human Resources, stated since the last presentation we have not received many questions. We have posted the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and answers on the website. They will be updated as questions come in.

Executive Session

At 8:41 p.m Ms. Marelli made a motion to go into Executive Session and to adjourn from the executive session without returning to open session. Dr. Denman seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously 4-0 with one absent (Marasco, Marelli, Failing, and Denman).

Adjournment

At 9:01 p.m. Mr. Failing made a motion to adjourn. Dr. Denman seconded the motion and the motion carried 4-0 with one not present. (Marasco, Marelli, Failing, and Denman).


Kevin R. Fitzgerald, Ed. D., Executive Secretary Date 4/20/21

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