

WATERBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION

MINUTES ~REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, September 21, 2023 – 5:30 p.m.

Waterbury Arts Magnet School, 16 South Elm Street, Waterbury, Connecticut.

PRESENT: President Sweeney, Commissioners Brown, Hernandez, Ireland, Navarro, O'Brien, Orso, Serrano-Adorno, and Van Stone.

ABSENT: Commissioner Nardozzi.

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Verna Ruffin, Chief Operating Officer Nicholas Albini, Director of Security & School Safety Daniel Barry, Chief Fiscal Officer Doreen Biolo, Attorney Joseph Britton, Chief Academic Officer Janet Frenis, Director of Pupil Services Wendy Johns, Assistant Superintendent Joseph Johnson, Assistant Superintendent Juan Mendoza, Director of Communications Belen Michelis, Deputy Superintendent Darren Schwartz, Director of Equity and Inclusion Lara White, and Supervisor of Management, Information, and Technology Will Zhuta.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES: Grace Henderson, Waterbury Arts Magnet School.

1. SILENT PRAYER

President Sweeney called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. with a moment of silence led by Dr. Ruffin.

SUPERINTENDENT: In our moment of silence this evening let us remember members of the Waterbury Public Schools education community who have passed away:

- *Joseph Semprini: Former teacher in Waterbury Public Schools, passed away on May 9, 2023.*
- *Elaine Longino: Former Board of Education Commissioner from January 1982 through December 1985, passed away on August 17, 2023.*
- *Antoinette Pestretto: Former food service worker at Wallace Middle School, passed away on August 23, 2023.*
- *Helen Carmody: Former teacher's aide at Tinker School, passed away on August 26, 2023.*
- *James Vander Eyk: Former substitute teacher at Kennedy High School, passed away on September 2, 2023.*

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Commissioner Orso led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

3. ROLL CALL

CLERK: Commissioner Brown.

BROWN: Present.

CLERK: Vice President Hernandez.

HERNANDEZ: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Ireland.

IRELAND: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Nardozzi (absent). Commissioner Navarro.

NAVARRO: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner O'Brien.

O'BRIEN: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Orso.

ORSO: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Serrano-Adorno.

SERRANO-ADORNO: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Van Stone.

VAN STONE: Present.

CLERK: President Sweeney.

SWEENEY: Here.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

Upon a motion by Commissioner Navarro and duly seconded by Commissioner Ireland, it was voted unanimously to receive and place on file communications as listed:

- a) Copy of communication from Civil Service dated August 15, 2023 to Dwayne Thompson regarding offer of temporary and at will employment for the position of Temporary Maintainer I.
- b) Copy of communications dated August 15, 2023 from Civil Service certifying Stephanie Johnson for the position of Paraprofessional II and Julia Johnson, Rebecca Guluzzy, and Stefanie McKenna for the position of Paraprofessional I.
- c) Copy of communication dated August 15, 2023 to Fernanda Vitinio-Villarreal regarding offer of employment for the position of Food Service Worker.
- d) Copy of communication dated August 16, 2023 from Civil Service certifying Vicky Halle for the position of School Secretary.
- e) Copy of communication dated August 17, 2023 from Civil Service certifying Kimberly Dunn for the position of School Secretary.
- f) Copy of communication dated August 17, 2023 from Civil Service certifying Lurbin Cacho-Zuniga for the position of Paraprofessional II.

- g) Copy of communication dated August 17, 2023 to Alings Andre regarding offer of temporary and at will employment for the position of Temporary Maintainer I.
- h) Copy of communications dated August 17, 2023 from Civil Service certifying Bryan Collins and Hector Gomes for the position of Maintainer I.
- i) Copy of communications dated August 17, 2023 to Heidyness Alvarez, Fallon Yulfo, and Carmen Pabon regarding offer of employment for the position of Food Service Worker.
- j) Email communication from CABA dated August 31, 2023 regarding Policy Highlights.
- k) Copy of communication from Civil Service dated August 25, 2023 certifying George Walters for the position of Carpenter.
- l) Copy of communication from Civil Service dated August 25, 2023 to Dean Campbell regarding offer of employment for the position of Food Service Worker.
- m) Copy of communication dated August 28, 2023 from Civil Service certifying Yvonne Santa Maria for the position of Paraprofessional I.
- n) Copy of communication from Civil Service dated August 28, 2023 to Verlen Barnes regarding offer of employment for the position of Food Service Worker.
- o) Copy of communication dated August 28, 2023 from Civil Service certifying Jose Ruiz Jr. for the position of Maintainer I.
- p) Copy of communication from Civil Service dated August 29, 2023 to Fausto Cruz regarding offer of temporary and at will employment for the position of Temporary Maintainer I.
- q) Copy of communications dated August 29, 2023 from Civil Service certifying Kendra Brown, Jasmine Johns, Donna Thomas, Athena Williams, and Bianey Gomez for the position of Paraprofessional I.
- r) Copy of communication dated August 29, 2023 from Civil Service certifying Caslyn Lustal for the position of Paraprofessional II.
- s) Copy of communications from Civil Service dated August 29, 2023 to Jenna Seeley regarding offer of employment for the position of Office Aide and to Sharon Pais regarding offer of employment for the position of Food Service Worker.
- t) Copy of communication dated August 30, 2023 from Civil Service certifying Brittany Gilliams for the position of Paraprofessional II.
- u) Copy of communication from Civil Service dated August 30, 2023 to Lilliam Rosario regarding offer of employment for the position of Food Service Worker.
- v) Copy of communication dated August 31, 2023 from Civil Service certifying Amanda Wilcox for the position of Paraprofessional II.
- w) Copy of communication dated August 31, 2023 certifying Latoya Maia for the position of Paraprofessional II.
- x) Copy of communications dated August 31, 2023 from Civil Service certifying Diana Whitlock, Leana Rodriguez, and Chastity Hernandez for the position of Cook.

- y) Copy of communication from Civil Service dated September 5, 2023 to Michelle Hunter regarding offer of employment for the position of Food Service Worker.
- z) Copy of communication dated September 5, 2023 from Civil Service certifying Laura Capellan for the position of Paraprofessional I.

6. SUPERINTENDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. Ruffin thanked the students and staff of 32 schools that participated in The Gathering this past Saturday.

7. PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

SWEENEY: I have no comments this evening.

8. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE'S COMMENTS

Grace Henderson, grade 12, Waterbury Arts Magnet School, informed the Board of the following:

- A college fair will be held with 20 different schools present.
- During the first week of September each grade level had a community meeting with the principals and counselors.
- The Global Leadership Institute presented the program to all grade 10 students this past week.
- After-school tutoring will begin for middle and high school students.
- A variety of after-school clubs are available including Key Club, Honor Society, Music, Math, and Dance. This year the Debate Club and Spirit Club will be debuted.
- There will be three main stage productions planned for this school year.
- There will be a Hispanic Heritage Month performance on October 25 at the Palace Theater.
- Students are currently running for junior and senior class officers.
- Students are noticing a lot of teachers are incorporating arts into the academic classroom keeping the students engaged.
- With the new block scheduling, teachers are incorporating mindfulness, playing motivational songs and calming videos into their daily class routine to help students decompress and mentally prepare themselves for the day.
- WAMS participated in The Gathering.
- A recruitment period is planned for October including advertising.
- Celebrations are under way for students who met their growth goal on Smarter Balance Testing.
- Various locations, including the Apron Stage, Recital Hall, Performing Arts Building, have received new lighting, seating and a wallpaper update.
- The Principal has created a Google form for students to express their concerns as well as meeting with the Student Governance Council throughout the year so as issues arise they are made aware to the staff and will be resolved.

9. CONSENT CALENDAR

SWEENEY: Does anyone wish to remove anything from the Consent Calendar?

President Sweeney proceeded to read the Consent Calendar items 9.1 through 9.12.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Brown and duly seconded by Commissioner Hernandez, it was voted unanimously to approve the Consent Calendar, items 9.1 through 9.12, as read and listed:

- 9.1 The Committee on Finance moves that the Waterbury Board of Education approve Amendment One (1) to the Professional Services Agreement with Waterbury Bridge to Success for Before and After School Care/Boost Community Site Coordinators, subject to any non-substantive changes approved by the Corporation Counsel's office.
- 9.2 The Committee on Finance moves that the Waterbury Board of Education approve of a Professional Services Agreement with Partners for Educational Leadership, Inc. (RFP #7320), through June 30, 2028, to provide Educational Leadership Coaching, subject to any non-substantive changes approved by the Corporation Counsel's office.
- 9.3 The Committee on Finance moves that the Waterbury Board of Education approve of an Agreement (template attached), with the following agencies, for Sub-Grantee Services under the School Readiness Program, subject to any non-substantive changes approved by the Corporation Counsel's office:

	<u>Priority Grant</u>	<u>Enrollment Grant</u>	<u>COLA</u>	<u>Total</u>
The Ark	\$704,996	\$75,840	\$61,567	\$842,403
Catholic Charities	\$356,960	\$38,400	\$31,173	\$426,533
Children's Community	\$321,264	\$34,560	\$28,056	\$383,880
Children's Village	\$196,328	\$21,120	\$17,145	\$234,593
Easter Seals	\$2,355,936	\$253,440	\$205,744	\$2,815,120
New Opp. (MM)	\$740,692	\$79,680	\$64,685	\$885,057
Greater Wtby. YMCA	\$2,418,404	\$260,160	\$211,199	\$2,889,763
NVCC	\$187,480	\$20,352		\$207,832
TEAM- Slocum School	\$354,816	\$139,776	\$30,986	\$525,578
	\$7,636,876	\$923,328	\$650,555	\$9,210,759

- 9.4 The Committee on Finance moves that the Waterbury Board of Education approve of a College Readiness and Success Agreement (#CB-00034829) with College Board to provide PSAT and SAT student assessments, subject to any non-substantive changes approved by the Corporation Counsel's office.
- 9.5 The Committee on Finance moves that the Waterbury Board of Education approve of the 2023-2025 Consolidated Two-year Federal Grant Application.

- 9.6 The Committee on Finance moves that the Waterbury Board of Education approve Amendment One (2) to the Professional Services Agreement with Seven Angels Theatre, Inc. to provide Seven Angels Theater Classes at 21 elementary schools, subject to any non-substantive changes approved by the Corporation Counsel's office.
- 9.7 The Committee on Finance moves that the Waterbury Board of Education approve Amendment two (2) to the Partner Agreement with Relay Graduate School of Education for Relay Teaching Residency Alternate Route to Certification Program, subject to any non-substantive changes approved by the Corporation Counsel's office.
- 9.8 The Committee on Finance moves that the Waterbury Board of Education approve of a Professional Services Agreement with Robert Davis d/b/a Summit Support Services, from October 1, 2023 through June 30, 2026, to provide Board Certified Behavior Analyst Services, subject to any non-substantive changes approved by the Corporation Counsel's office.
- 9.9 The Committee on Finance moves that the Waterbury Board of Education approve of a Professional Services Agreement with Valley Communications Systems (RFP #7710), through July 31, 2024, to provide Lightspeed Audio Solutions replacement and new installation services, subject to any non-substantive changes approved by the Corporation Counsel's office.
- 9.10 The Committee on Finance moves that the Waterbury Board of Education approve of Amendment One (1) to the Professional Services Agreement with Automated Logic Contracting Services, Inc. to provide Temperature Control and Ventilation Project Upgrades, subject to any non-substantive changes approved by the Corporation Counsel's office.
- 9.11 The Committee on Building & School Facilities moves that the Waterbury Board of Education approve the use of school facilities, at no charge, by the following school organizations and/or City departments:

Group Facilities and Dates/Times

Registrar of Voters	General Election November 7, 2023, 5:00am – 9:00pm
T. Begnal	(see attached for list of school sites)
M. Bergin	International School Gym: Wednesday, September. 6, 2023, 1:00pm-2:30pm (Preschool Professional Development) Rotella auditorium & computer room.: Wednesday, Nov. 1, 2023, 8am-3pm (Preschool Professional Development) Sprague gym: Wednesday, October 11, 2023, 5:00pm-7:00pm (Family Night event/Apples & Cider) Sprague gym: Thursday, November 2, 2023, 5:00pm-7:00pm (Family Night event/Turkey Time)
C. Carpentieri	Kennedy classroom: Mondays, September 11- December 11, 2023
M. Waters	4:00pm – 9:05pm (SCSU & WPS Cohort)
J. Frenis	WSMS media center: Sept. 19, Oct. 24, Nov. 28, Dec. 19, 2023 Jan. 23 and Feb. 27, 2024 3:00-4:30pm (Instruction Committee meetings)

H. Maxson	WAMS specific performing arts areas as specified Wednesday, October 4, 2023, 8am-3pm, Professional Development Wednesday, November 1, 2023, 8am-3pm, Professional Development
Silas Bronson Lib. M. Tierney	Kennedy-Torrington Football game: Saturday, October 7, 2023, 9am-1pm (set-up display next to field to promote library)
Dept. of Transp. J. Burns	Maloney café: Wednesday, October 25, 2023, 5:30pm-8:00pm (public information meeting by New Mixmaster Project Team)
Park& Rec. Dept. J. Stock	Kennedy gym: Saturday, September 23, 2023, 8:30am-6:00pm (basketball tournament – Project Longevity/Skills Academy)
V. Boatright	Wallace media center: Thursday, October 25, 2023, 5:30-6:30 pm (parents meet & greet re: college & career readiness)
K. Nizzardo	WSMS media center & 6 rooms: Wednesdays, Oct. 24 and Nov. 1, 2023 8am-3pm (Science Prof. Dev. days)
D. Bakewell	Maloney café: Friday, September 22, 2023, 5:00pm-8:00 pm (Family Night) Maloney café & gym: Friday, October 20, 2023, 4pm-9 pm (Costume event)
A. Jorge	Wallace media center.: Bilingual/ESOL, prof. dev. staff meetings: September 18, October 23, November 20, December 24, 2023, May 20, 2024
*Dr. White	WAMS media ctr.: Monday, Oct. 2 nd 3:30pm – 5:30pm (meeting for Social justice educators)
*V. Harris	Crosby media ctr.: Wed., Oct. 4 th 8:00am – 3:00pm (Prof. Dev. meeting)
*N. Toucet	W. Cross gym: Tues., Oct. 17 th 5:30pm – 6:30pm (School Choice Fair)
*A. Jorge	Wallace media ctr.: Mon., March 18 th 3:00 pm – 6:00 pm (Bilingual/ESOL staff meeting – Prof. Dev.)

- 9.12 The Committee on Building & School Facilities moves that the Waterbury Board of Education approve the use of school facilities and/or waiver requests by groups and organizations subject to fees and insurance as required:

GROUP	FACILITIES AND DATES/TIMES
Westover School	WSMS pool: weekdays, November 27, 2023 - March 1, 2024, 4:30pm-5:45 pm
D. MacNutt, A.D.	KHS pool: Saturdays, Dec. 2, 2023 – Feb. 24, 2024, 2-4:00 pm (swim program)

REQUESTING WAIVERS:

Wtby. Links, Inc.	WAMS media ctr.: September 2023 – June, 2024, 8:30am-12:00pm	
C. Hilton-Campbell	3 rd Saturday each month for meetings	(\$1,890.)
Wtby. Knights	Career Academy gym: September 9, 2023 thru Feb. 17, 2024, Saturdays	
Cheerleading	1:00-5:00 pm (Cheerleading practice)	(\$3,990.)
S. Clements	Crosby gym: Saturday, October. 7 and Saturday, November 11, 2023, 8:00am-2:00pm (cheerleading events)	(\$1,176.)
Mary, Mother of the Church	International School rooms: October 2023 – April 2024, 9:00am-11:00:am	
Atty. D. Buckley	two Sundays each month (Religious Instruction)	(\$1,764.)

GROUPS NOT SUBJECT TO FEES OR WAIVER DUE TO TIME OF USE OR PREVIOUS WAIVER:

Wtby Knights	Driggs gym: Sept. 1, 2023-Feb. 23, 2024, Monday-Friday, 5:45pm-8:15 pm
S. Clements	Kingsbury gym: Sept. 1, 2023-Feb. 23, 2024, Monday-Friday, 5:45-8:15 pm (cheerleading practice)
Wtby. Y Football	Generali gym: September 6 to November 8, 2023, Monday thru Friday.
M. Ricci	5:3-08:30 pm (cheerleading practice)

Hoops 4 Life D. Fryer	West Side gym: September 11-November 17, 2023, weekdays, 5:00-9:00 pm (basketball program)
Bouley Manor Neighb. Assoc.	Chase café: January 2024 - December 2024, 2 nd Thursday each month (except July & August) 6:00-8:00 pm for meetings
PAL M. Macary	Maloney gym: September to December, 2023, Tuesday & Thursday, 6:00pm-9:00pm (basketball program)
Wtby. Ballers T. Lott	Carrington gym: Mon. – Thurs., September 11 to October 26, 2023, 6pm-9 pm, Sprague gym: Mon. – Thurs., September 11 – October 26, 2023, 6pm-8:30 pm
*Lithuanian Club A. Gelazauskas	Gilmartin gym: Wednesdays Sept. 27, 2023 – May 22, 2024 7:00-9:00 pm (basketball practice)
*PAL M. Macary	Reed field: Sept.-Nov. Mon. thru Fri. 5:00-7:30pm and Sat. 9am-4pm (soccer practice)
*Wtby. Y Football M. Ricci	Crosby field: Sat., Sept. 24 th 10am – 2pm (football game)

10. ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT

There were no items removed from the Consent Calendar.

11. COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

- 11.1 Upon a motion by Commissioner Hernandez and duly seconded by Commissioner Brown, it was voted unanimously to approve the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) 2023 Board Recognition Award/Board Distinction Award application.

12. COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

- 12.1 Upon a motion by Commissioner Orso and duly seconded by Commissioner Ireland, it was voted unanimously to approve the submittal of FY 2024 Alliance and Priority Schools Grants.

13. COMMITTEE ON GRIEVANCES

- 13.1 Upon a motion by Commissioner Serrano-Adorno and duly seconded by Commissioner Hernandez, it was voted unanimously to approve that SAW Grievance 2022-2023-05, heard by the Committee on September 18, 2023, be denied.

5. PUBLIC ADDRESSES THE BOARD

Upon a motion by Commissioner Brown and seconded by Commissioner Serrano-Adorno, it was voted unanimously to suspend the regular order of business at 5:46 p.m. to allow the public to address the Board.

PUBLIC SPEAKERS:

Mickel Gonzalez, 36 Laval Street, Waterbury – spoke regarding her children who are currently homeschooled and is looking for assistance for her children with special needs.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Brown and seconded by Commissioner Serrano-Adorno, it was voted unanimously to return to the regular order of business at 5:49 p.m.

14. SUPERINTENDENT'S NOTIFICATION TO THE BOARD

Upon a motion by Commissioner Brown and duly seconded by Commissioner Serrano-Adorno, it was voted unanimously to receive and place on file items 14.1 through 14.7, Superintendent's Notification to the Board as listed:

14.1 Athletic appointments:

<u>Name</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Effective</u>
Shippee, Kieran	KHS	Assistant Volley Ball Coach	08/28/23
Morrison, Terrance	KHS	Head Volleyball Coach	09/13/23
Williams, Dajee	WHS	Assistant Softball Coach	05/19/23

14.2 Grant funded appointments:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position/Location</u>	<u>FT/PT</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Union</u>	<u>Funding</u>	<u>Effective</u>
Aidoo, Syreeta (transfer)	Behavior Counselor Duggan	FT	\$28.77/hr	F UPSEU 69	Title I/A 23-25	09/07/23
Banaj, Alketa	Classroom Asst. Wilson (correction)	FT	\$15.41/hr	UPSEU 68	Title I/A 22-24	08/24/23
Brooks, Randford (promotion)	Behavior Counselor Enlightenment	FT	\$25/hr	F UPSEU 69	Alliance 23-24	08/21/23
Caisaguano, Elizabeth	Classroom Asst. Maloney	FT	\$15.41/hr	UPSEU 68	MMS Magn. 22-23	08/24/23
Gaston, Jordan	Prev. Specialist Enlightenment	FT	\$18.14/hr	F UPSEU 69	Priority 22-23	09/07/23
Gonzalez, Amari	Parent Liaison Generali	FT	\$15.88/hr	UPSEU 69	Title I/DW 22-24	09/07/23
James, Zakai	Communications Assistant	FT	\$20/hr	F UPSEU 69	Alliance 23-24	09/07/23

14.3. Maloney Magnet School's Before and After School Program appointments:

<u>Teachers</u>		
Barbieri, Katie S.	Fusco, Sara	Orsini, Taylor
Beltran, Erin	Grazhdani Eneida	Perrucci, Daria (sub)
Bussey, Jennifer	Grendzinski, Katie (sub)	Smith, Holly
Cancro, Dana	Hibbs, Jennifer	Strachan, Andrea (sub)
Colangelo, Esther	Irizarry, Dana	.
Couture, Cheryl	Lund, Kelly	<u>Administration</u>
Dunn, Andrew	Maloney, Susan	Dombrowski, Jason
Egan, Alzira	Mecca, Kylie (sub)	Gittings, Stacey
Fiore, Patience	Miller, Jennifer	Yamashita-Iverson, Kazumi

14.4 Walsh School's Before/After Program appointments:

Danzinger, Byron – Teacher (replacing Ken Yaffe)

14.5 Extended School Hours (ESH) appointments:

<u>School</u>	<u>Last name</u>	<u>First Name</u>	<u>Assignment</u>
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Chase	Arroyo	Ivet	Sub for para
	Commendatore	Joe	Sub for teacher
	DelMoral	Denise	Para Grade 1
	DiGiovancarlo	Krista	Secretary
	Eldridge	Lori	Administrator
	Lopez	Marlene	Sub for para
	Mancinone	Taylor	Grade 1 teacher
	Marchetti	Savannah	Sub for teacher
	O'Donnell	Caitlin	Grade 2 teacher
	Pitcaim-Broughton	Dorothea	Art Teacher
	Santiago	Jennifer	Sub for para
	Turner	Gina	Para Grade 2
Duggan	Besemer	Katie	Teacher
	DeFeo	Dawn	Sub-Teacher
	DiGiovanni	Melissa	Administrator
	Fidanza	Carla	Administrator
	Fields	Susan	Teacher
	Gaudiosi	Karen	Teacher
	McCasland	Maureen	Teacher
	Mullen-Gillyard	Vickie	Educational Aide
	Pelletier	Allison	Teacher
	Scirica	Erin	Teacher
	Tzepos	Julie	Teacher
Generali	Alfredson	Sarah	Administrative Assistant
	Hart	Rebecca	3 rd grade teacher
	Lyons	Jean	Admin Sub
	Moscariello	Beth	Para Sub
	Mulvehill	Michelle	Teacher Sub
	Neibel	Amy	4 th grade teacher
	Piccochi-Frank	Christina	Admin
	Poulter	Dennis	5 th grade teacher
	Walker-Templeton	Donna	Para
	Walling	Maggie	Para
Tinker	Bemer	Maura	Teacher
	Biello	Claudia	Administrator
	Brown	Edie	Teacher
	Defeo	Sharon	Teacher
	Desanto	Tina	Teacher
	Diaz	Mildred	Paraprofessional
	Eldredge	Sandy	Paraprofessional
	Guerrera	Maria	Teacher
	Sagendorf	Jan	Admin Sub/Teacher
	Teel	Mackenzie	Teacher
	Wehry	Nina	Secretary

14.6 Retirements:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Effective</u>
Tolman, James	NEMS/Vice Principal (date correction)	01/02/24

14.7 Resignations:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Effective</u>
Barbieri, Angela	RMS/MMS Social Worker	10/11/23
Beierle, Karen	WSMS/Family Consumer Science	06/15/23
Bhatnager, Sonali	Reed/Library Media	new hire
Bickley, Robert	W. Cross/Grade 6 Science	05/15/23
Carrano, Amber	Gilmartin/Grade 6 Math/Science	06/15/23
Coty, Heidi	Reed/Grade 3	08/16/23
Dombrowski, Andrew	NEMS/Grade 8 SS	08/15/23
Guerrera, Olivia	Bucks Hill/Grade 1	09/08/23
Johannes, Christopher	Reed/Grade 7-8 Science	09/01/23
Kaponis, Rachael	State Street/Special Education	09/29/23
Leggitt, Karen	WMS/Special Education	09/15/23
Minton, Anna	Academy @ WMS/Grade 5 ELA/SS	08/16/23
Morales, Elizabeth	Duggan/Social Worker	09/22/23
Moriarty, Shea	Duggan/Grade 6-8 Social Studies; Walsh/Interim VP	08/17/23
Moquete, Narciso	WCA/Info Tech	08/31/23
Phillips, Emily	NEMS/Science	09/08/23
Riston, Cariane	WMS/Special Education	08/16/23
Styles, Alex	Walsh/Grade 4	new hire
Walsh, Conor	Wilson	09/01/23
Wilde, Elizabeth	NEMS/Numeracy	08/16/23

15. CONTINUED DISCUSSION – School Safety and Security Task Force Report

President Sweeney opened the discussion reiterating that she asked the Commissioners at the last meeting to look over the recommendations of the Task Force and come back with some top priorities that they thought the District can make some progress on. The Task Force asked for something that we can work on and maybe complete in 90 days.

Vice President Hernandez stated there was discussion of metal detectors in various groups of the Task Force. The Superintendent responded that the process of a RFP on a weapons' detector has begun. She suggested piloting the detectors at one of our high schools with a report back to the Board and Task Force with a decision to be made whether to implement or examine other options.

Discussion continued with Commissioners in favor and against the proposal.

Commissioner Brown hopes this will be part of a fuller package and feels we need more input from the Community and students before it is piloted. She would like to see data – what is uneven discipline going on?

Commissioner Serrano-Adorno feels weapon detectors are not extreme. The safety of students and staff is essential; it's a peace of mind in preventing other issues and will help families worry less.

Commissioner Van Stone feels parents are entitled to hear about an incident in school. However, an example from last year in Crosby when texts started going out parents actually somehow got into the building looking for their child. In that whole time the situation was already put to bed. Parents have to understand that when it comes to security it's mostly a "need to know" in order to keep the children safe. A situation needs to be under control and then a communication can go out.

Vice President Hernandez stated "communication" was one of the main topics during the Task Force discussions. There has to be an understanding that there are things that cannot be discussed and to know that the safety of everyone is on our minds.

Commissioner Navarro stated there needs to be more data, he does not feel a weapons' detection system is efficient and will give a false sense of security; more data is needed. Possibly the implementation of clear book bags.

Vice President stated it would be a pilot and we could also pilot the plastic book bags. We are all tasked with making sure we come up with something to make the community feel that their children are safe in our schools. I'm not gung-ho for the metal detectors but we need to try it.

President Sweeney feels it's a sad day when we have to look at metal detectors, however it won't be sad if a child is saved. She doesn't feel it is a final solution but it is a solution that we've heard from the public and students. If it will give them a sense of security, then we have to try it. It has to be something the district can afford, have sufficient staff, we need to look at it. This list stays in place until we have explored every single possibility, until we decide to move forward with it or abandon it.

Commissioner Orso talked about the lack of mental health support which is listed as high seriousness, high urgency, and will get worse if nothing is done. Stated this is something we can start within the next 90 days.

President Sweeney said there is a lot of mental health supports going on at this time. Maybe they're not aware we offer, make sure they're fully aware.

Commissioner Orso stated they definitely are not aware of what we are doing. Vice President Hernandez agreed – even though we have the website, parent liaison, etc., at the Task Force meeting a lot of people didn't realize what was available to our students, maybe educating people on that information so they can inform others; may be something we need to look into as well, have a community forum.

Commissioner Ireland stated high urgency the parents feel like they're not being communicated to, see more parent engagement, maybe training one parent or with the liaisons and having them go out and train other parents. I do see and hear a lot of parents state they did not know or didn't get the information.

Commissioner O'Brien would like to see a lot of what's down here which she knows is already in progress, would like to separate the list with what is already in progress. That's another form of communication. She doesn't know where the gap is.

Vice President Hernandez stated one of the things on the Task Force that was mentioned is the fact that people didn't understand IEPs or that someone has a 504 and that maybe teachers should be a little more aware of which students, they didn't feel that people knew that each student is in the proper place and they have the proper person standing in front of them assisting them with their educational needs.

Commissioner Serrano-Adorno compliment the new website but feels some families may not know how to navigate, maybe have their PTO, at Open House or Governance Counsels, they can sit with families and show how you can navigate, have a welcome committee to help the parents.

Commissioner O'Brien feels a lot of parents once their student gets to the high school they should start advocating for themselves and that's where the breakdown comes.

President Sweeney stated collectively we need to look at that communication and what that we can do to make sure every school gets the word out the same way. Make sure all the schools understand that that's how we want them to communicate so that everybody is getting the same message.

Commissioner Brown inquired about the anonymous hotline (Sandy Hook Promise). Dr. Ruffin said she can get some information from them and other resources and how they're being utilized, how each school is equipped with resources and to some extent how they're being utilized.

President Sweeney stated the definition of shelter in place as opposed to lockdown, we need to do something much bigger and broader, there are a lot of people that don't understand the difference. Maybe on Teacher/Parent nights make sure parents have a chance to question and really understand what those terms mean. Also, regarding doors, we need to tell people the status on entry door conditions at the schools. Get that information out, it would be a calming affect for them to know we are doing something. We need to do the right things to make the public comfortable that we are doing our best to make our students and staff safe.

Dr. Ruffin clarified what the Task Force said when they indicated the number of concerns that they had. They were asked to define what they meant by weapons, it's not just a matter of being able to get the data on how many weapons, not the weapons that are found, it's the ones that are not. The message to the Board is that some people would feel comfortable knowing that there's an additional factor. There was a strong opinion regarding a weapons' protector, not a metal detector. She hears that data is important, we're going to get a quote because the RFP has been written and will give us information so we can look at it, we can examine it, see where it goes from there, implement in the school, we will learn from it, make a decision after that. We'll take the list and put them in an order to say what are we already doing, what is in progress, and what the Board would consider for the 90-days or longer. The District has invested millions of dollars in resources for social and emotional and they are in place in our schools across the district. Also, there will be another RFP for an innovative/alternative school that will help students with high suspension rates and connect them with social workers and substance abuse counselors.

16. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon a motion by Commissioner Hernandez and duly seconded by Commissioner Serrano-Adorno, it was voted unanimously to convene into executive session at 6:50 p.m. for discussion concerning the appointment, employment, performance, evaluation, health, or dismissal of a public officer or employee; passed unanimously.

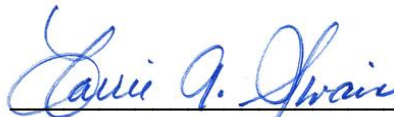
PRESENT: President Sweeney, Commissioners Brown, Hernandez, Ireland, Navarro, O'Brien, Orso, Serrano-Adorno, and Van Stone, Superintendent Verna Ruffin, Assistant Superintendent Juan Mendoza, and Attorney Joseph Britton.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Hernandez and duly seconded by Commissioner Navarro; it was voted unanimously to return to the regular order of business at 7:28 p.m. with no votes taken.

17. ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Commissioner Hernandez and duly seconded by Commissioner Serrano-Adorno, it was voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:28 p.m.

ATTEST:



Carrie A. Swain, Clerk
Board of Education