AGENDA –Wednesday, August 28, 2024

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7
BOARD OF EDUCATION
6:00 p.m.
Newbury Library Media Center

Regional School District No. 7 Board of Education Mission Statement:

We believe the public education is an essential component of a free and democratic society. In a partnership of family, school, community, and local and state government, our mission is to enable all students to meet high standards, make productive choices in their personal lives, contribute to a diverse global society and act as responsible citizens.

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

2.0 PUBLIC PORTION

3.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES
- 3.1 July 10, 2024 Regular Board of Education Meeting
- 3.2 July 31, 2024 Special Board of Education Meeting

4.0 REPORTS
- 4.1 Principals' Reports – R. Cornelius, G. Franklin
- 4.2 Superintendent's Report – S. LePage
- 4.3 Director of Finance and Operations - J. Gaskins

5.0 OLD BUSINESS
- 5.1 Updates
- 5.2 BOE Goals
- 5.3 BOE Workshop- Thursday, September 19, 2024
- 5.4 Discussion of RSD#7 Cell phone policy ~ Policy # 5131.81 Electronic Devices Use of Private Technology Devices by Students, Position Statement and Policy Guidance from CSDE for Personal Technology and Use in CT Schools

6.0 NEW BUSINESS
- 6.1 New Hire Report- updated since July 10, 2024 BOE Meeting

7.0 CORRESPONDENCE
- 7.1 L. Munger- HS English Teacher - Resigned 7/22/2024
- 7.2 G. Robertson - HS English Teacher - Resigned 8/25/2024

8.0 OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO SPEAK ON AGENDA ITEMS

9.0 ADJOURNMENT

Enclosures:
- July 10, 2024 Regular Board of Education Meeting Minutes
- July 31, 2024 Special Board of Education Meeting Minutes
- Policy # 5131.81 Electronic Devices Use of Private Technology Devices by Students
- Position Statement and Policy Guidance from CSDE for Personal Technology and Use in CT Schools
- New Hire Report
- L. Munger's letter of resignation
- G. Robertson's letter of resignation

Next Meetings: *September 11, 2024 @ 6:00 p.m. – Newbury Library Media Center*
September 19, 2024 BOE WORKSHOP
September 25, 2024 @ 6:00 p.m. – Newbury Library Media Center

We welcome the public to share their comments via publicinput@nwr7.org. Your emails will be considered during the Public Comment session of the meeting. Thank you for your participation. .

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7

RSD#7 Little Theater
Board of Education Meeting
July 10, 2024 – 6:00 p.m.
DRAFT

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

CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Sexton Read called the Regular Board of Education meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

MOTION by Mr. Jerram, seconded by Ms. Crone, to **AMEND** the BOE AGENDA to include a possible motion under Mr. James Gaskins's report for Food Service Meal Pricing Increases. **AYE**: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Crone, Ms. Bell and Ms. Duran. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED**.

PUBLIC PORTION: None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Ms. Bell, seconded by Ms. Kenneson, to **APPROVE** the May 6, 2024, District Budget Meeting Minutes, as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Duran. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** Ms. Kenneson. **MOTION PASSED.**

MOTION by Ms. Bell, seconded by Ms. Crone, to **APPROVE** the May 8, 2024, Regular Board of Education Meeting Minutes, as amended. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Duran. **MOTION PASSED.**

MOTION by Ms. Duran, seconded by Ms. Jerram, to **APPROVE** the May 15, 2024, Special Board of Education Meeting Minutes, as amended. **AYE**: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Crone, Ms. Bell and Ms. Duran. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

REPORTS

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Policy Progress: Superintendent LePage communicated that RSD#7 purchased the Shipman and Goodwin Policy Service at a reasonable cost. He explained that he has been working with Shipman and Goodwin to determine a process to update RSD#7 policies. He hopes to work through each series in a timely manner.

Staffing Updates: Superintendent LePage informed all that RSD#7 hired Barbara Beebe for the Director of School Counseling position on July 8. She is a Torrington veteran counselor and experienced department leader. She is the recipient of the 2024 Comprehensive School Counseling Program of the Year, and was the CSCA 2022 School Counselor of the Year. She is familiar with the area and the community and will be a vital leader as RSD#7 looks to expand and transform RSD#7's comprehensive school counseling services in grades 7-12. The STEP Program Coordinator position (hired through Shared Services) hired Francesca Daniele, former Gilbert School Department English Chair with certification in Special Education.

Middle School Principal Search Updates: Currently, there are 27 applicants. Superintendent LePage communicated he is familiar with some applicants. He expressed there are some excellent candidates in the pool. The process is as follows: Tuesday, 7/16/24, the job posting closes and all applications will be reviewed to narrow the pool; Thursday, 7/18/24, calls will be made to the candidates to schedule interviews. The first round of interviews will be on Thursday, 7/25/24 in person with the first interview committee consisting of Middle School Leadership team members and one or more administrators. The goal will

be to send 2-3 semi-finalist candidates forward to interview with the district team, board members and also a panel of students tentatively on 7/30/24. Ultimately, Superintendent LePage will make the final decision based on all of the insights gathered throughout the interview process. Hopefully, a new principal will be named in the early days of August.

Middle School Science: Hiring process is in the final stages and hopefully to hire a finalist next week.

Hiring Practices Overview: Superintendent LePage communicated that costs are being reduced in some areas of the hiring process and some positons of new hire are breaking even due to the nature of the position and the need for more expertise and experience in some positions over others.

Technology Insights: There was a discussion about students' use of technology devices and policy. Some districts are moving towards no technology devices among students during the school day. Superintendent LePage expressed that the BOE should review policy on this topic.

Teacher Leader Requested Book Study: Superintendent LePage met with Kim Pershmann, HS English Department Chair, and Nancy Wiecking, HS English Teacher to discuss offering a book study on *The Anxious Generation, by Jonathon Haidt*. The findings of the research of this book align well with the policy of technology devices by students in the classroom/school.

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

23/24 Budget: Mr. Gaskins explained that the most impactful key in the budget is the assessment offset for the next budget cycle. In this year's budget, the assessment offset came in at $819,700.00 which is higher than usual. Where the offset landed as of June 30, 2024 is at $743,654.00. Between the two, there is an approximate $80,000.00 shortfall. This shortfall will be a reduction in next year's budget process, which is a .33% increase built into next year's budget. This was handled through the budget freeze and deferred expenses.

Summer Projects: HVAC State Mandated Indoor Air Quality legislation. There are two reports that have to be completed: one report is an annual report that can be completed internally. The other report is a five-year report that has to do with the study of the complete HVAC system. RSD#7 has to hire an outside company to complete this study by January 2025. This expense is coming out of the 24-25 budget. The cost is approximately $92,000.00. Other projects include the roof leak repairs which will cost approximately $20,000.00. Another project is the fire alarm system which needs to be upgraded. Other projects include track repairs, parking lot repairs, and the baseball field hill drainage project, to name a few.

Food Service Program: Mr. Gaskins communicated that the cost of breakfast and lunch pricing has been the same since 2015. He expressed that the cost of food and the cost of labor have increased over the years, and the equipment in the RSD#7 kitchen needs repairs and possible replacement. The current pricing for breakfast is $1.90 and lunch is $3.00. Reviewing pricing in other districts, the districts have been currently charging between $3.75 to $4.50 for lunch. Mr. Gaskins proposed that RSD#7 move the lunch pricing from $3.00 to $3.75 and move breakfast pricing from $1.90 to $2.25.

MOTION by Ms. Bell, seconded by Ms. Crone, to **INCREASE** the RSD#7 breakfast price to **$2.25** and lunch price to **$3.75** for the 24-25 School Year. **AYE**: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Crone, Ms. Bell and Ms. Duran. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

OLD BUSINESS

Updates: None

BOE Goals- Ms. Sexton Read proposed to have a BOE Professional Development Workshop for all BOE members possibly in August or September. This workshop will entail the responsibilities of board members and the process of strategic planning. She will ask CABE to perform this workshop and discuss the topics at hand. Brief discussion followed.

NEW BUSINESS

NEW HIRE REPORT 2024- 2025

LAURA BROCHU – 1.0 High School Technical Education Teacher – HS Grades 9-12

Replacing Kurt Dougan- retired teacher and educator at NWR7 for 3 years-allowable by CSDE
Former 6th grade teacher Thomaston Public High School (2018-2024)
Received Tech Ed Certification in March 2024
BA Science Salve Regina University
MA Arts University of St. Joseph
Level III Step 8

TERYN GOULET - 1.0 Agricultural Education Teacher – HS Grades 9-12

Replacing Erick Wildes who resigned on 6/30/24
Former ASTE Intern for Wamogo Agriscience (2023-2024)
Former Intern at Litchfield County 4-H Extension Office (2022)
Farmhand at Geer Family Farm (2019-present)
MA Vocational Agriculture Instruction and Curriculum University of Connecticut
BA Agriculture and Natural Resources with Minor Agriculture Learning/Outreach University of Connecticut
Level III Step 1

JACOB GREEN – 1.0 Science Teacher – HS Grades 9-12

Replacing Kelsey Leach who resigned after a 1 year extended leave on 6/30/24
Long -Term Substitute for Ms. Leach for 2023-2024 school year
BA Health Science/Pre-Physical Therapy, Minor in Health Care Management Springfield College
Doctoral Studies in Physical Therapy Springfield College
Level V Step 2

DANIEL PORRI - 1.0 Music Teacher - MS Grades 7-8

Replacing Jim Lesieur who retired on 6/30/2024
Former Music Educator and Band Director at Litchfield Public MS/HS and Wamogo MS/HS since August 2007
Former Instrumental Music Director for Litchfield MS/HS (2010-2022)
MA Music Education Boston University
BA Music University of Connecticut
Level III 12

AMANDA SOLTIS – ATHLETIC TRAINER

RSD#7 Graduate – basketball, soccer and softball player
BA Science in Athletic Training Central Connecticut State University (May 2019)
Intern Athletic Trainer Newington High School
Head Athletic Trainer for Hartford Health Care – Litchfield High School (March 2020-Present

BARBARA BEEBE- 1.00 DIRECTOR OF SCHOOL COUNSELING

Replacing Lori Foote who resigned 6/30/24
Former Torrington High School School Counselor Department Coordinator (been at Torrington High School since 2007)
2022 School Counselor of the Year (CSCA)
BA of Arts in Psychology Gordon College
Master of Education in Psychology- School Counseling Springfield College
Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study University of New England
Level V Step 12

Technology Devices by Students: Ms. Sexton Read communicated that Superintendent LePage should reach out to his colleagues in terms of what other districts are currently doing about the use of technology devices by students in

classrooms/school. Ms. Sexton Read will reach out to the BOE Chair colleagues to also determine how other districts are handling this topic. Brief discussion followed.

CORRESPONDENCE

J. Lesieur's Letter of Retirement as of 6/30/24

Mr. Lesieur was the MS Music and Band Teacher for 26 years at RSD#7. He retired as of June 30, 2024. The BOE wished Mr. Lesieur all the best in his retirement and thanked him for the wonderful years of service and dedication the district, students and staff. The BOE wished Mr. Lesieur all the best in the next phases of his life.

Lori Foote- Director of School Counseling- letter of resignation as of 6/30/24

MOTION by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Ms. Crone, to **ACCEPT** Lori Foote's letter of resignation, as presented. The BOE wished, with much gratitude, all the best in moving forward in Ms. Foote's new position and thanked her for the four years of service to the students, staff, and district. **AYE**: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Crone, Ms. Bell and Ms. Duran. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

Fran Amara- MS Principal- letter of resignation- 8/23/24

MOTION by Mr. Jerram, seconded by Ms. Crone, to **ACCEPT** Principal Fran Amara's letter of resignation, with sincere gratitude, as presented. The BOE wished Principal Amara all the best with his new position and thanked him for eleven years of dedicated service to the students, staff, district and community. **AYE**: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Crone, Ms. Bell and Ms. Duran. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

Approval of Girls' Volleyball Camp – RSD#7 Gymnasiums 8/12/24 to 8/15/24

MOTION by Mr. Jerram, seconded by Ms. Kenneson, to **APPROVE** the use of the RSD#7 gymnasiums for the Girls' Volleyball Camp on 8/12/24 to 8/15/24, as presented. **AYE**: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Crone, Ms. Bell and Ms. Duran. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO SPEAK ON AGENDA ITEMS
None.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Ms. Kenneson, seconded by Ms. Duran, to **ADJOURN** at 7:22 p.m. **AYE**: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Crone, Ms. Bell and Ms. Duran. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

The next BOE Meeting is scheduled for August 28, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Barrett
Board Clerk

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7

RSD#7 Superintendent LePage's Office

Special Board of Education Meeting

July 31, 2024 4:30 p.m.

DRAFT

PRESENT: Chair Ms. Molly Sexton Read (B), Vice-Chair Mr. Robert Jerram (NH), Ms. Deborah Bell (N), Ms. Kim Crone (N), Ms. Mary Duran (B), Ms. Terri Kenneson (C) by phone, Ms. Lisa Fragale (C), Superintendent Steven K. LePage. **Absent**: Secretary/Treasurer Mr. Noel Gauthier (NH).

CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Sexton Read called the Special Board of Education meeting to order at 4:37 p.m.

MOTION by Ms. Crone, seconded by Ms. Fragale, to **APPROVE** the RSD#7 Middle School Principal position to Mr. Ryan Cornelius, as presented. **AYE**: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Crone, Ms. Bell, Ms. Duran, and Ms. Fragale. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED**.

MOTION by Ms. Bell, seconded by Ms. Duran, to **APPROVE** the RSD#7's Draft School Leader and Educator Evaluation and Support Plan, as presented. **AYE:** Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Crone, Ms. Duran, and Ms. **Fragale. NAY: None. ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Ms. Duran, seconded by Ms. Fragale, to **ADJOURN** at 4:50 p.m. **AYE**: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Crone, Ms. Bell, Ms. Duran and Ms. Fragale. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Barrett
Board Clerk

Students

Electronic Devices

Use of Private Technology Devices by Students

Students may possess privately owned technological devices on school property and/or during school sponsored activities, in accordance with the mandates of this policy and any applicable administrative regulations as may be developed by the Superintendent of Schools. The Region 7 Board of Education ("Board") considers allowing students to bring to school such devices to be a privilege and not a right. The Board reserves the right to revoke this privilege if a student fails to adhere to the following guidelines and/or the Board's acceptable use and student discipline policies.

Parents and/or guardians must read and sign the attached agreement form before a student may be permitted to bring to school a privately owned technological device.

Definitions

Board Technology Resources

For the purposes of this policy, "Board Technology Resources" refers to the Board's computers and instructional technologies; communications and data management systems; informational technologies and the Internet; and any other technology resources used by the school district and accessible by students.

Privately Owned Technological Devices

For the purposes of this policy, "Privately Owned Technological Devices" refers to privately owned wireless and/or portable electronic hand-held equipment that can be used for word processing, wireless Internet access, image capture and recording, sound recording, information transmitting and/or receiving, storing, etc. These devices may include, but are not limited to, personal laptops, Smartphones, network access devices, Kindles, Nooks, cellular telephones, radios, walkmen, CD players and walkie-talkies, Blackberries, personal data assistants, I-Phones and other electronic signaling devices.

Use of Privately Owned Technological Devices

Privately owned technological devices may not be used during instructional time, except as specifically permitted by instructional staff.

Use of any such device for an improper purpose is prohibited. Improper purposes include, but are not limited to:

- Sending any form of harassing, threatening, or intimidating message, at any time, to any person (such communications may also be a crime);
- Gaining or seeking to gain unauthorized access to Board technology resources;
- Damaging Board technology resources;
- Accessing or attempting to access any material that is obscene or contains pornography;
- Cyberbullying;
- Taking pictures without the specific permission of the subject of the picture;
- Using a privately owned technological device to violate any school rules, including the unauthorized recording (photographic or audio) of another individual without the permission of the individual or a school staff member; or
- Taking any action prohibited by any Federal or State law.

Search of Privately Owned Technological Devices

A student's privately owned technological device may be searched if there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that the search will turn up evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or the rules of the school. Any such search shall be reasonably related to the objectives of the search and not excessively intrusive in light of the age and sex of the student and the nature of the infraction.

Responsibility for Privately Owned Technological Devices

Students are responsible for the safety and use of their privately owned technological devices. If a privately owned technological device is stolen, lost, or damaged, a report should be made to the building principal, who will investigate the loss in a manner consistent with procedures for stolen or damaged personal property. Students and parents should be aware that the Board is not liable for any privately owned technological device that is stolen, lost, or damaged while at school. Furthermore, the Board shall not be liable for any data plan charges or any other costs associated with the use of private technological devices. For that reason, students are advised not to share or loan their privately owned technological devices with other students.

Students shall take full responsibility for their device and shall keep it safely stored when not in use. Classroom teachers will determine the best storage location for such devices. Students are required to take home their privately owned technological devices at the end of each school day.

Disciplinary Action

Misuse of the Board's technology resources and/or the use of privately owned technological devices to access or utilize the Board's technology resources in an inappropriate manner or in a manner inconsistent with this policy will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action. For students, a violation of this policy may result in loss of access privileges, a prohibition on the use and/or possession of privately owned technological devices on school property, and/or suspension or expulsion in accordance with the Board's policies related to student discipline.

Access to Board Technology Resources

It is the policy of the Region 7 Board of Education to permit students, using their privately owned technology devices, to access the Board's computers and instructional technologies; communications and data management systems; informational technologies and the Internet; and any other technology resources used by the school district and accessible by students. Additionally, it is the expectation of the Board of Education that students who access these resources while using privately owned technology devices will act at all times appropriately in ways which are fully in accord with applicable policies concerning technology use as well as all local, state, and federal laws.

Through the publication and dissemination of this policy statement and others related to use of the Board's computer systems, as well as other instructional means, the Board educates students about the Board's expectations for technology users.

The Board technology resources shall only be used to access educational information and to promote learning activities both at home and at school. The Board considers access to its technology resources to be a privilege and not a right. Students are expected to act at all times appropriately in ways which are fully in accord with applicable policies concerning technology use as well as all local, state, and federal laws when using the Board technology resources. Failure to do so will result in the consequences outlined herein and in other applicable policies (including, but not limited to, the Bullying Policy, Student Discipline Policies and the Use of Computers Policies).

Students must abide by the procedures outlined in this policy and all policies and applicable regulations outlined in the Board's computer use and other applicable policies. Students will be given specific information for log-on and access procedures using school accounts. No user may deviate from these log-on/access procedures. Students are advised that the Board's network administrators have the capability to identify users and to monitor all privately owned technological devices while they are logged on to the network. Students must understand that the Board has reserved the right to conduct monitoring of Board

technology resources and can do so despite the assignment to individual users of passwords for system security. Any password systems implemented by the Board are designed solely to provide system security from unauthorized users, not to provide privacy to the individual system user. The system's security aspects, message delete function and personal passwords can be bypassed for monitoring purposes. Therefore, students should be aware that they should not have any expectation of personal privacy in the use of privately owned technological devices to access Board technology resources. This provision applies to any and all uses of the Board's technology resources and that any privately owned technological devices access same.

Harm to Board Technology Resources

Any act by a student using a privately owned technological device that harms the Board's technology resources or otherwise interferes with or compromises the integrity of Board technology resources will be considered vandalism and will be subject to discipline and/or appropriate criminal or civil action.

Closed Forum

This policy shall not be construed to establish a public forum or a limited open forum.

(cf. 5114 - Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process)

(cf. 5131 - Conduct)

(cf. 5131.8 - Off School Grounds Misconduct)

(cf. 5131.82 - Restrictions on Publications and Written or Electronic Material)

(cf. 5131.911 - Bullying)

(cf. 5131.913 - Cyberbullying)

(cf. 5144 - Discipline/Punishment)

(cf. 5145.5 - Sexual Harassment)

(cf. 5145.51 - Peer Sexual Harassment)

Legal References: Connecticut General Statutes

10-233j Student possession and use of telecommunications devices

31-48d Employees engaged in electronic monitoring required to give prior notice to employees.

53a-182 Obstructing free passage: Class C misdemeanor.

53a-183 Harassment in the second degree: Class C misdemeanor.

53a-250 Definitions.

Electronic Communication Privacy Act, 28 U.S.C. §§2510 through 2520.

Eisner v. Stamford Board of Education, 440 F. 2d 803 (2nd Cir 1971)

Trachtman v. Anker, 563 F. 2d 512 (2nd Cir. 1977) cert. denied, 435 U.S. 925 (1978)

Hazelwood School District v. Ruhlmeir, 484 U.S. 260, 108 S Ct 562 (1988)

Bethel School District v. Fraser, 478 US 675 (1986)

Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community Dist., 393 US 503, (1969)

Policy adopted: 7/21/2010
Policy revised: 3/9/2011
Policy revised: 7/18/2012
Policy revised:

POSITION STATEMENT AND POLICY GUIDANCE

Personal Technology Use in Connecticut Schools:

Impact of Social Media and the Use of Cell Phones on Student Learning and Mental Health

STATE OF CONNECTICUT | CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION | AUGUST 2024

The Connecticut State Board of Education (Board) believes that all students deserve an excellent education that supports growth in knowledge, maturity, wellness, and readiness for a life of success and global citizenship. The Board's *Comprehensive Plan for Education 2023-2028*: *Every Student Prepared for Learning, Life, and Work Beyond School* prioritizes creating learning spaces that are safe, compassionate, and culturally responsive, and that are designed to support the academic, physical, and social-emotional well-being of all learners. The Board further believes that schools must ensure that Personal Technology Use in Schools policies address student relationships with technology, online spaces, social media, and cell phones and their impact on learning and mental health.

Technology can be employed in schools to personalize and accelerate learning when integrated thoughtfully and appropriately. Students benefit from instruction that incorporates hands-on and digital tools in conjunction with comprehensive digital citizenship modeling and media literacy curricula that teaches technology skills to prepare students for lifelong success. Online platforms can also give youth access to a diverse community, expanding their awareness of others who share abilities and interests, leading to an increased sense of belonging and acceptance. Online educational content can introduce students to different world views, expanding their minds to gain a better understanding of others and the world.

However, in 2023, the United States Surgeon General issued an *Advisory on Social Media and Youth Mental Health,* which highlights the concerning relationship between excessive, unrestricted social media use and increased mental health challenges in youth. Additionally, emerging research suggests that social media has a significant negative impact on brain development at a time in adolescence when identities and a sense of self-worth are forming, and social rewards, pressures and acceptance are paramount.

Students who feel intellectually, physically, and emotionally safe and healthy are more likely to be successful learners. In order to create a school environment that promotes health and safety, it is important to note the impact that unrestricted access to cell phones and social media can have on learning spaces. Between the ages of 10 and 14 the number of students with smartphones more than doubles, from 4 in 10 to 9 in 10. Notifications during the school day and the lure of social media platforms negatively impact students' ability to be fully present in the classroom (UNESCO) resulting in lost instructional time, fewer opportunities for in-person interactions, and significant competition for dedicated and sustained student attention reported by teachers (Pew Research Center).

Given the risks and negative impact on learning and mental health, local and regional boards of education, in collaboration with school leaders, educators, families and students, should develop and enact a districtwide Personal Technology Use in Schools policy inclusive of cell phones and current and emerging technologies.

Therefore, the Board strongly recommends that such policy restricts the use of cell phones during the school day to ensure student engagement in learning, support emotional well-being, and strengthen students' interpersonal skills, peer interaction, and social communication.

POLICY GUIDANCE
Personal Technology Use in Schools

The Connecticut State Board of Education (Board), in support of its Position Statement on Personal Technology Use in Schools, offers the following guidance for districts to consider when drafting and adopting policies to restrict access to cell phones during the school day. This guidance emphasizes creating engaging spaces for learning to mitigate the negative impact that cell phones have on student learning. Included in this guidance are considerations for specific policies and practices in elementary, middle, and high school based on developmental readiness and maturity. Specific recommendations are provided for appropriate roles and responsibilities for local and regional boards of education and administrators in policy development; for school leaders and educators in ensuring consistent policy implementation; for families and students in supporting and complying with the district policy; and for higher education institutions and the Connecticut State Department of Education in preparing and supporting educators, school leaders, administrators, and local and regional boards of education.

A comprehensive policy should include language that incorporates age-appropriate restrictions that align with developmental considerations of students and the structure of the school day in each grade-band and school.

- **Elementary School**
  - The policy for elementary school students should focus on removing cell phones from the classroom to maximize academic, social, and emotional development. Elementary school students' school day environments and experiences and classroom activities should create spaces that encourage personal interaction among peers.
  - Specific procedures for collecting and isolating cell phones upon arrival at school or in the classroom may be necessary to ensure compliance with the policy.

- **Middle School**
  - The policy for middle school students should also focus on removing cell phones from the school day or classroom. Developmentally, this age group is particularly vulnerable to the negative effects of excessive personal technology use and has a difficult time controlling their impulses. Concurrently, middle school students experience increased autonomy and independence during the school day, which can lead to increased opportunity for cell phone misuse.
  - Possession of cell phones in this age group is likely to be viewed as a rite of passage into adulthood, so communication and application of policies that restrict use must be developed in consideration of the specific challenges of middle school students.

- **High School**
  - The policy for high school students regarding school day access and use should still be restrictive; however, as appropriate, high school students may be developmentally ready to take more ownership of controlling excessive use and understanding responsibilities regarding technology use to better prepare them for life after high school.
  - Inappropriate and potential illegal use of technology is likely to increase in high school on and off school grounds, including accessing and sharing inappropriate content and cyberbullying, requiring inclusion of expectations regarding technology use in the student Code of Conduct.
  - Cell phones that are turned off and kept out of sight create classroom environments where students are less likely to be distracted by interruptions, can focus more on learning, and allow educators to concentrate on instruction instead of constantly monitoring student cell phone use. The policy should therefore address high school students having cell phones on their person during class.

Responsibilities of local boards of education and superintendents of schools in developing a Personal Technology Use in Schools Policy

- Engage and elicit feedback from school leaders, educators, families, students, and relevant stakeholders in the development and adoption of a policy that aims to mitigate the negative impact of unrestricted access to personal technology in schools.
- Consider the development of associated regulations that align with the policy and provide for professional learning of all school staff in the implementation of the policy.
- Ensure that the foundation for the Personal Technology Use in Schools policy is districtwide in its vision, scope, and implementation.
- Consider the unique vulnerabilities and opportunities of different student developmental stages to create age-appropriate segments of the districtwide policy.
- At all age levels, behavioral expectations related to technology should be included in the student Code of Conduct to address issues such as cyberbullying, accessing/sharing inappropriate content, recording or taking photographs without consent, plagiarism, and the unapproved use of artificial intelligence (AI) software and applications.
- Embed a Personal Technology Use in Schools policy within a broader, intentional digital educational strategy. Consider a systemic approach toward developing digital literacy and citizenship to ensure that it is comprehensive and equips students from Kindergarten through Grade 12 with the skills and tools necessary to safely navigate online spaces.
- Assist families in understanding healthy uses of technology, setting ground rules, utilizing parental controls on devices, and ways to monitor technology use.
- Review and update the district policy regularly to address future technological devices, online platforms, and emerging threats.
- Consult board legal counsel during policy drafting and as needed to ensure compliance with applicable federal and state laws and alignment with best practices. Areas to consider include: school personnel access to content on student personal technology devices; consequences for violations of board policy or student Code of Conduct; accessing or disseminating inappropriate, harmful, or illegal content; material created on personal devices that may fall under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) or constitute part of an educational record; and access for students with disabilities or medical needs as outlined in individualized education programs (IEP) and Section 504 accommodations.

Responsibilities of school leaders and educators in supporting consistent implementation of the policy

- **School Leaders:**
  - Engage educators, families, and students in a mindful introduction to the Personal Technology Use in Schools Policy that is sensitive to the concerns of all involved.
  - Support educators in learning about the policy and the consistent, uniform application and enforcement of the district policy and associated regulations.
  - Provide educators with professional development on best practices for incorporating technology into classroom lessons and activities using allowable school-issued devices.
  - Develop a graduated response to inappropriate personal technology use that encourages students to see the value in a cell-phone-free space and creates opportunities to develop positive skills related to technology use.
  - Create a process for exceptions to the Personal Technology Use in Schools policy based on a student's specific needs and as appropriate according to each student's individualized education program (IEP), Section 504 accommodations, individualized health care plan, or learning plan.
  - Create a positive environment regarding media and technology by incorporating digital citizenship education as part of the curricula.

- **Educators:**
  - Recognize that impulse control is a skill that needs to be developed and that students require support and instruction to establish healthy and responsible relationships with technology and social media.
  - Create engaging lessons that foster in-person group work and collaboration among peers to strengthen students' interpersonal skills, peer interaction, and social communication.
  - Model the digital habits and the utilization of personal technology and social media in alignment with the district policy.
  - Participate in professional learning opportunities related to supporting positive digital habits, digital citizenship, and integrating the effective use of technology in the classroom.

Responsibilities of families, caregivers, and students to support the implementation of and adherence to the policy

- **Families and Caregivers:**
  - Promote student engagement in learning by being mindful of communicating with students via cell phone during the school day and encourage children to use planning and problem-solving skills, coping strategies, and in-school supports to help foster independence.
  - Support school initiatives to create technology-free spaces that allow students to fully participate in their education while encouraging in-person connections with peers and adults.
  - Model a healthy relationship with social media and screen time at home and reduce the use of technology as a tool for occupying young children.
  - Consider using age-appropriate parental controls on smartphones to encourage the development of healthy relationships with technology.
  - Establish open lines of communication with children and have regular conversations regarding the safe and responsible use of technology.

- **Students:**
  - Request to participate in opportunities to provide feedback in the development of the district policy and grade-band specific policies, as appropriate.
  - Follow the district Personal Technology Use in Schools policy and the student Code of Conduct.
  - Engage in lessons and classroom discussions related to social and emotional learning, digital citizenship, media literacy, and the responsible use of technology.
  - Encourage peers to use technology and social media appropriately, including being aware of and limiting the frequency in which they check their cell phones.
  - Report concerning and inappropriate cell phone use and online behavior by peers to a principal, teacher, school counselor, psychologist, social worker, or any trusted adult in the school building.

Responsibilities of state-level partners in preparing educators and supporting districts in developing and implementing district policies

- **Higher Education Institutions (Educator Preparation Programs):**
  - Participate in initiatives related to technology use in schools, including the development of model curricula for digital citizenship, media literacy, and responsible use of technology and social media.
  - Prepare pre-service candidates to effectively create a positive learning environment in accordance with the Connecticut Common Core of Teaching, focusing on evidence-based approaches to incorporating 21st century technology in the classroom.
  - Prepare pre-service candidates to develop student skills and dispositions to respond to real-world digital challenges in safe, effective, and thoughtful ways.
  - Contribute to the field of emerging research and best practices related to personal technology use by children and adolescents.

- **Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE):**
  - Develop a Kindergarten through Grade 12 Model Curricula for Digital Citizenship, Media Literacy, and Responsible Use of Technology and Social Media.
  - Provide professional learning and technical assistance on the effective integration and implementation of the Kindergarten through Grade 12 Model Curricula.
  - Continue to invest in resources that assist school districts in policies that address emerging technologies.
  - Monitor future national guidance and federal resources for dissemination to aid districts in maintaining prevailing content in district policies.
  - Coordinate and partner with state agencies, policymakers, and stakeholders to support district efforts in policy development and implementation.
  - Continue support of and collaboration with the research community to gather data to support district policies and elevate best practices.

Connecticut Sample Policies

The Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) has developed a Sample Policy and Guidance for local and regional boards of education. CABE is currently updating this document for use by districts in developing policies.

Connecticut Association of Boards of Education: Sample Policy and Guidance: Adopted January 2019, revised November 2023

The following excerpts from sample policies and resources are meant to provide an array of content for districts to consider in developing their own policy to restrict cell phone use during the school day. Policies should consider the needs, ages, and utilization of social media and technology of students; the norms of the school-family relationships and expectations; and the teaching and learning needs of the school community. They are not intended to imply one strategy or policy is best or more successful than another, as this must be determined by the local or regional board of education as to what meets the needs of the district, its staff, families, and students.

Torrington Public Schools

- **Elementary school:** Students may bring cell phones and wearable technology to school but must turn their cell phones off or place them on silent mode. Cell phones and wearable technology must remain completely out of view (e.g., in the student's backpack) for the entire school day.
- **Middle School:** Students may bring cell phones and wearable technology to school but must ensure that they are turned off or on silent mode and locked in a district issued cell phone pouch throughout the entire school day. Students will lock their cell phone pouches upon entry to the building and unlock them at dismissal.
- **High School:** Students may bring cell phones and wearable technology to school but must ensure that they are turned off or on silent mode and locked in a district issued cell phone pouch throughout the entire school day. Students will lock their cell phone pouches upon entry into the school building and unlock them at dismissal. Cell phones will only be allowed if requested by a teacher as necessary for a specific lesson, upon approval by an administrator 24 hours in advance. If approved, the mobile kiosk will be signed out to the teacher for that period or the day. At no time will students be obligated to possess or own a personal electronic device to meet their educational needs.

Milford Public Schools

- **Elementary School:** No use of a cell phone/smartwatch or other personal communication device will be permitted during school hours. These devices must be turned off or on silent and left in backpacks, stored in a student's locker/cubbie or other place designated by building administration.
- **Middle School:** No use of a cell phone/smartwatch or other personal communication device will be permitted during school hours. These devices must be turned off or on silent and left in backpacks, stored in a student's locker or other place designated by building administration. The exception at the middle school level is when the use of a cell phone is authorized in a classroom for academic purposes with the consent of the teacher.
- **High School:** Possession of a cell phone/smartwatch or other personal communication device while in school is permitted, however, the devices must be turned off or on silent and be out of sight in classrooms during the school day unless authorized by the classroom teacher for academic purposes. Cell phones may be used in non-classroom areas as designated by school administration.

Lisbon Public Schools

- **Grades PreK-Grade 4:** Cell phones/smartwatches are not permitted on school premises.
- **Grades 5-Grade 8:** Cell phones/smartwatches should be off and out of sight when students walk into the building. Cell phones/smartwatches are to be stored in lockers throughout the school day. Students are permitted to use their cell phones/smartwatches during after-school homeroom (3:00–dismissal) per the teacher's permission (for example: practice is canceled; a parent needs to be notified).
- Parents should not expect to communicate directly with their children using their cell phone/smartwatch during the designated school time. Parents who need to communicate with their child in the case of an emergency should call the school office and communicate with school personnel the nature of their emergency who will then communicate as appropriate with the student impacted by the emergency.

References and Resources

Social Media and Mental Health

Advisory on Social Media and Youth Mental Health The Surgeon General's Advisory (2023) *(accessed 8/2/2024)*

Does Social Media Use Cause Depression Child Mind Institute (2024) *(accessed 8/2/2024)*

Constant Companion: A Week in the Life of a Young Person's Smartphone Use Common Sense Media (2023) *(accessed 8/2/2024)*

Engaging, Safe, and Evidence-Based: What Science Tells Us About How to Promote Positive Development and Decrease Risk in Online Spaces for Early Adolescents UCLA Center for Developing Adolescents (2022) *(accessed 8/2/2024)*

Haidt, Jonathan. *The Anxious Generation*. Penguin, March 26, 2024.

Social Media's Impact on Brain Development

How Social Media Use Affects Adolescent Brain Development New York-Presbyterian Health Matters (2023) *(accessed 8/2/2024)*

Why Young Brains are Especially Vulnerable to Social Media American Psychological Association (2023) *(accessed 8/2/2024)*

Digital Media and the Developing Brain The Handbook of Adolescent Digital Media Use and Mental Health Chiu, Michelle & Chein, Jason (2022) *(accessed 8/2/2024)*

Potential Risks of Content, Features and Functions: The Science of How Social Media Affects Youth American Psychological Association (2024) *(accessed 8/2/2024)*

Resources for Districts and Educators

Digital Citizenship, Internet Safety, and Media Literacy Guidelines and Recommended Actions Connecticut State Department of Education (2020) *(accessed 8/2/2024)*

Smartphones in School? Only When They Clearly Support Learning UNESCO (2023) *(accessed 8/9/2024)*

School-Based Initiatives Promoting Digital Citizenship and Healthy Digital Media Use The Handbook of Adolescent Digital Media Use and Mental Health Weintsein, Emily & James, Carrie (2022) *(accessed 8/2/2024)*

Guiding Middle and High School Students to Develop a Clear Understanding of Their Cell Phone Use Edutopia (2022) *(accessed 8/2/2024)*

Smartwatches: The Next Challenge for School Cellphone Policies Education Week (2024) *(accessed 8/2/2024)*

Cellphone Bans in School Are Back. How Far Will They Go? NEA Today (2023) *(accessed 8/2/2024)*

Student Social Media Use Goeler, Jody. The CABE Journal (May 2024) *(accessed 8/2/2024)*

Framing the Smartphone Policy Deliberations Goeler, Jody. The CABE Journal (June 2024) *(accessed 8/2/2024)*

What's It Like To Be a Teacher in America Today? Pew Research Center (2024) *(accessed 8/13/2024)*

Teens, Social Media and Technology Pew Research Center (2023) *(accessed 8/13/2024)*

Resources for Families and Caregivers

Online Health and Safety for Children and Youth: Best Practices for Families and Guidance for Industry Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (2024) *(accessed 8/2/2024)*

How Using Social Media Affects Teenagers Child Mind Institute (2024) *(accessed 8/2/2024)*

Age-Based Media Reviews and Resources for Families Common Sense Media *(accessed 8/5/2024)*

Family Media Plan American Academy of Pediatrics *(accessed 8/5/2024)*

Connecticut Legislation

Play-based Learning:

Public Act 23-159 An Act Concerning Teachers and Paraeducators

School Climate:

Public Act 23-167 Act Concerning Transparency in Education

Public Act 24-45 An Act Concerning Education Mandate Relief, School Discipline and Disconnected Youth

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7
NEW HIRE REPORT 2024- 2025
~Hired after 7.10.24 BOE MEETING~

RYAN CORNELIUS – Middle School Principal

Replacing Fran Amara- resigned his positon as MS Principal~ last day of work 8/23/24
Former Assistant Principal of Plainville Community School since 2021
Former 6th Grade Math Teacher and Former 5th grade teacher at Consolidated School District of New Britain
BA in Social Studies from Adrian College in Michigan
MA of Instructional Technology from Northern Arizona University in Arizona
Educational Leadership from Central CT State University

KYLIE BENTON - 1.0 High School English Teacher – HS Grades 9-12

Replacing Lexi Munger who resigned on 7/22/24
Lead Teacher at Birch Mountain Day School in Manchester from 2023-2024
Program Director, Senior Unit Director at YMCA Camp Mohawk since 2019
BA in Secondary Education from University of Vermont
Level 1 Step 1

STEVEN ROES – 1.0 Middle School Science Teacher – MS Grades 7-8

Replacing Angela Sabolcik who resigned on 6/30/24
Grade 7 Science Teacher at West Hartford Public Schools from 2023-2024
Science Teacher at Granby Memorial High School from 2017-2023
Science Teacher at the Master's School in Simsbury from 2012-2017
BA in Biology & Adolescence Education from Houghton College in New York
MA in Curriculum and Instruction from University of Saint Joseph
Educational Leadership from Central CT State University
Level V Step 12

EVE MOLEY - 1.0 Middle School English Teacher - MS Grades 7-8

Replacing Lesley Sullivan, veteran English Teacher at RSD#7 who moved from Middle School English to the High School English for the 2024-2025 school year
Student Teacher at Torrington High School from Nov. 2023 to June 2024
BA and MA of English Education from University of Connecticut
Level III Step 1

LESLEY SULLIVAN ~ Veteran Middle School English Teacher moved to High School English for 2024-2025 school year

Replacing Gabrielle Robertson who resigned effective 8/25/2024
Veteran English Teacher at RSD#7 since 2000
Level V Step 12

On Mon, Jul 22, 2024 at
9:46 AM Lexi Munger <lmunger@nwr7.org> wrote:

Good Morning Mr. LePage & Mr. Franklin,

I hope this email finds you well. It is with sadness that I must inform you that I will not be returning to Northwestern Regional 7 for the 2024-2025 school year.

I would like to thank you both as well as the school community for the opportunity to work alongside such a talented group of educators and an amazing group of students.

I have attached a formal letter of resignation below. I will be coming into the building in the next week to gather my classroom belongings and hand over my keys.

Sincerely,
Lexi Munger

--
Ms. Lexi A. Munger
NWR7 English Department
Class of 2027 Advisor

NORTHWESTERN REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

BARKHAMSTED, COLEBROOK, NEW HARTFORD and NORFOLK

The mission of Northwestern Regional High School is to foster academic and personal excellence in every student. In partnership with families and communities, we create a safe learning environment dedicated to developing the skills of lifelong learning. Our dynamic and challenging educational program prepares individuals to respect diversity and become responsible citizens in a rapidly evolving global environment.

Gary B. Franklin, Principal
gfranklin@nwr7.org

Andrew P. Bakulski,
House I Assistant Principal
abakulski@nwr7.org

Daniel P. Carroll,
House II Assistant Principal
Director of Student Activities
dcarroll@nwr7.org

Dear Mr. Gary Franklin and Mr. Steve LePage,

I would like to express my deep gratitude for the growth and guidance you both have offered me; it has been an honor serving as one of your educators, and I will forever cherish the memories from my time at NWR7. The opportunities I have been given and the relations I have made are of great value to me, and I cannot overstress how truly fortunate I am for my years spent on the hill in the Northwest corner. With a heavy heart, I am writing to inform you that because I am relocating, I will not be returning to Northwestern, and this letter signifies my 30-day notice. I am proud to have been an educator to you both, and I will always be a highlander.

My very best,

Gabrielle Robertson