

Board of Directors Regular Business

APPROVED MINUTES



Meeting Date: February 13, 2025

Draft Posted: February 19, 2025

Approved Posted: March 14, 2025

Present: Dale Bernardoni, Chester/Grades K-6 (Zoom); W. Scott Brown, Lyme & Old Lyme/Region 18; Kate Ericson, LEARN; Jennifer Favalora, Killingworth/Region 17; Elizabeth Fernandes, Westbrook; A. Terri Garrity, East Haddam (Zoom); Katie Gauthier, Stonington (Zoom); Mary Harris, Ledyard (Zoom); Nancy Johnston, Essex/Grades K-6 (Zoom); Cindy Luty, Preston (Zoom); Robert Mitchell, Montville; Gregory Perry, Norwich (Zoom); Chet Stefanowicz, North Stonington; and Laurie Wolfley, Waterford

Not Attending and Not Represented: Eric Bauman, East Lyme; Alisha Blake, New London; Mary Ann Connelly, Madison; Kristen Peck, Guilford; Sean Reith, Salem; Beverly Washington, Groton; Jane Wisialowski, Old Saybrook; Vacant, Chester, Deep River, Essex Region #4; Vacant, Clinton; Vacant, Deep River/Grades K-6; and Vacant, East Hampton

Guests: Dr. Teresa DeBrito, Superintendent of East Haddam Public Schools; Tara Amatrudo, Marine Science Magnet High School Principal; Michael Kuczenski, Marine Science Magnet High School Magnet Theme Coach; and Michael Belden, LEARN Chief Financial Officer

Meeting began at 9:00 a.m.

- 1. Call to Order:** Pledge of Allegiance
- 2. Audience and Guests:** Introductions
- 3. Public Comment:**
- 4. Reading and/or Review of Correspondence:**
- 5. Superintendents' Perspective:** East Haddam Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Teresa DeBrito, presented to the Board on the work of East Haddam Schools. Dr. DeBrito outlined a disciplined approach to achieving educational success based on the book, *The Four Disciplines of Execution for Educators*, by Lynn Kosinski, Meg Thompson, and Sean Covey, which focuses on setting and executing Wildly Important Goals® (WIGs®) to improve student outcomes in spite of the daily challenges educators face. The four disciplines include Focus and Accountability, Lead Measures and Data, Vision and Collaboration, and Engagement and Student Success.
- 6. Consent Agenda:**
 - 6.1 Approval of the DRAFT Minutes, Regular Business Meeting—January 9, 2025
 - 6.2 Approval of Budget Summary as of January 31, 2025
 - 6.3 Approval of Grant Applications— LEARN Perkins V Consortium for \$99,023.00 to support Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Early College Experience programs across member districts/schools, including East Haddam Public Schools (Nathan Hale-Ray HS), Ledyard Public Schools (Ledyard HS), North Stonington Public Schools (Wheeler HS), Portland Public Schools (MS and HS), Region 4 (Valley Regional HS), Region 18 (Lyme-Old

Lyme HS), and Westbrook Public Schools (Westbrook HS), from February 3, 2025, to August 31, 2025.

Motion to accept the Consent Agenda as presented.

- **Presented by W. Scott Brown**
- **Second Chet Stefanowicz**
- **Motion passed with 13 votes in favor and 0 votes against**

7. Information from the Executive Director:

- 7.1 Hiring—Resignations and new hires, including trend reports: In January, LEARN made 16 strategic hires, consisting of 13 replacements and 3 new positions, including a Regional Magnet Coordinator and a Business Office Associate. LEARN has 35 vacancies and is actively focused on filling these positions.
- 7.2 Distributions — Executive Director Ericson provided the Board with LEARN’s Family of Magnet Schools One-Pager and the Governor’s Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Biennial Budget Proposal. Both were included in the full agenda packet.
- 7.3 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, Regular Business Meeting—January 24, 2025
- 7.4 LEARN Building Committee Meeting Minutes—January 24, 2025
- 7.5 Legislative Updates: Executive Director Ericson reported that Executive Directors statewide engaged with key legislative leaders, including the Speaker of the House and the Appropriations Committee, and presented to the Education Committee, highlighting the role of RESCs in supporting Connecticut’s education system, including early childhood, special education, CTE, and multilingual learners.
- 7.6 LEARN Agency Updates: Executive Director Ericson shared that LEARN continues to make significant progress across several initiatives. The LEARN Building Committee is preparing to interview for an Owners Rep, the demolition permit is moving forward and LEARN is addressing follow-up questions from the State related to the Space Waiver Letter. Positive feedback was received from the Office of Policy Management on LEARN’s RPIP Grant application, with clarifications resubmitted. In collaboration with a group of superintendents, LEARN is in the process of exploring regionalization of human resources functions to support districts with smaller infrastructures. The Infant/Toddler Program at The Friendship School submitted its license application to the Office of Early Childhood, and preparations are underway for a successful launch. LEARN’s regional services, including nursing, IT, HR, and business office support, continue to receive positive feedback from districts. Additionally, LEARN hosted a successful disABILITY Summit with over 200 attendees, 55 vendors, and 73 volunteers, including students, providing valuable resources for families with members who have disabilities.

8. Old Business: None.

9. New Business:

9.1 New Policy #3516, Business and Non-Instructional Operations, Series 3000; “Safety”

Motion to approve New Policy 3516, Safety, as presented.

- **Presented by Laurie Wolfley**
- **Second Jennifer Favalora**
- **Motion passed with 13 votes in favor and 0 votes against**

9.2 New Policy #6190, Instruction, Series 6000; “Early Learning Centers”

Motion to approve New Policy 6190, Early Learning Centers, as presented.

- **Presented by W. Scott Brown**
- **Second Cindy Luty**

Discussion was held in which a change was requested to revise the language in the second paragraph of Appendix D of the policy. The proposed language revision includes a statement that the Pyramid Model, as referenced in the policy, is based on a trauma-informed approach. The language revision was clarified and agreed upon to be included in the second paragraph, first sentence.

Motion made to amend the original motion to include that Appendix D will include language regarding trauma-informed practices.

- **Presented by Chet Stefanowicz**
- **Second A. Terri Garrity**
- **Motion passed with 13 votes in favor and 0 votes against**

Motion made to approve the original motion as amended.

- **Originally presented by W. Scott Brown**
- **Original second Cindy Luty**
- **Motion passed with 13 votes in favor and 0 votes against**

9.3 Revised Policy #4132, Personnel/Certified, Series 4000; “Staff Development”

Motion to approve Revised Policy 4132, Staff Development, as presented.

- **Presented by W. Scott Brown**
- **Second Jennifer Favalora**
- **Motion passed with 13 votes in favor and 0 votes against**

9.4 Revised Policy #5115, Students, Series 5000; “Exclusion From School For Disciplinary Purposes”

Motion to approve Revised Policy 5115, Exclusion From School For Disciplinary Purposes, as presented.

- **Presented by Chet Stefanowicz**
- **Second Cindy Luty**
- **Motion passed with 13 votes in favor and 0 votes against**

9.5 Revised Policy #5141.10, Students, Series 5000; “Administering Medicines To Students”

Motion to approve Revised Policy 5141.10, Administering Medicines To Students, as presented.

- **Presented by Laurie Wolfley**
- **Second W. Scott Brown**
- **Motion passed with 13 votes in favor and 0 votes against**

9.6 Revised Policy #5141.11, Students, Series 5000; “Child Abuse, Neglect, and Sexual Assault”

Motion to approve Revised Policy 5141.11, Child Abuse, Neglect, and Sexual Assault, as presented.

- **Presented by Chet Stefanowicz**
- **Second Elizabeth Fernandes**
- **Motion passed with 13 votes in favor and 0 votes against**

9.7 Revised Policy #5155, Students, Series 5000; “Students With Special Healthcare Needs,”

Motion to approve Revised Policy 5155, Students With Special Healthcare Needs, as presented.

- **Presented by W. Scott Brown**
- **Second Chet Stefanowicz**
- **Motion passed with 13 votes in favor and 0 votes against**

9.8 OCR Vacation of the 2024 Title IX Regulations

Motion to approve the reversion to the previous LEARN Title IX Policies 4118.2 (Certified), 4218.2 (Non-Certified), and 5005 (Students), from PROHIBITION OF SEX DISCRIMINATION, INCLUDING SEX-BASED HARASSMENT to SEX DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT, as outlined under the 2020 Title IX regulations, in light of the recent confirmation from the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) that the 2024 Title IX regulations have been vacated. This action will ensure continued compliance with federal guidance and maintain consistency with prior policy standards, pending any further updates or guidance from relevant authorities.

- **Presented by W. Scott Brown**
- **Second Chet Stefanowicz**
- **Motion passed with 12 votes in favor, 0 votes against, and 1 abstention**

9.9 Retirement of Policy #4131: Series 4000; “Continuing Education Units”

Motion to retire Policy #4131: Series 4000; “Continuing Education Units” as a result of the changes in the law and the revisions as proposed to Policy #4132, Students, Series 4000; “Staff Development”.

- **Presented by Chet Stefanowicz**
- **Second Nancy Johnston**
- **Motion passed with 13 votes in favor and 0 votes against**

- 10.** Educational Perspective: Marine Science Magnet High School (MSMHS) Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP) Mid-Grant progress report: Tara Amatrudo, Principal of Marine Science Magnet High School (MSMHS), and Magnet Theme Coach, Mike Kuczenski, provided a mid-year progress update to the board, highlighting key developments as the school enters its third year of the five-year MSAP grant. Their presentation focused on: **Creating Pathways**—MSMHS is actively developing pathways to engage a diverse group of students and ensure alignment with the school’s mission of equity and social justice; **Curriculum & Instruction**—Developing high-quality curriculum and instructional practices and integrating the school’s theme into all aspects of learning; **Recognition**—MSMHS was honored as a Blue Ribbon School last year for academic excellence and its commitment to student success; **Student Belonging**—MSMHS creates a culture of student belonging, which continues to be a central focus, fostering an inclusive and supportive environment; and **Entrepreneurial & Career Opportunities**—Students are afforded unique learning and entrepreneurial opportunities aimed at helping students find career paths that align with their interests and skills.

- 11.** Roundtable Discussion: District Budget Process—Board members engaged in discussion about the current budgeting processes within their respective districts, sharing updates on where each stands in the process.
- 12.** Future Roundtable Topics: Cell Phones.
- 13.** Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn at 11:14 a.m.

- **Presented by Jennifer Favalora**
- **Second Elizabeth Fernandes**
- **Motion passed unanimously with 11 votes in favor and 0 votes against**

Respectfully submitted by:
Jamella A. A. Etienne

JOIN ZOOM MEETING

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88179290855?pwd=L8ZTZ1TTOmeH7Xj47dwTVfgnSADbGa.1>

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