

Coventry Board of Education
Coventry, Connecticut

Board of Education Regular Meeting
Approved Minutes of Thursday, February 27, 2025
Administration Building Conference Room

Board Members Present:

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

Board Members Absent:

None

Administrators Present:

Dr. David J. Petrone, Superintendent of Schools

Also Present:

Lillian O'Neil, Student Board of Education Representative

I. Call to Order

J. Beausoleil called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

II. Salute to the Flag

J. Beausoleil led the salute to the flag.

III. Audience of Citizens

There were none

J. Beausoleil moved agenda item V, the Consent Agenda, to item IV and renumbered the remaining items accordingly.

IV. VOTE: Consent Agenda

A. Accept the Retirement of Ted Berent, CNH Teacher

B. Accept the Retirement of Alison Blair, CHS Teacher

~~**C. Approve the CNH May 2026 Field Experience to Washington, DC**~~

E. Eaton asked to move the Field Experience out of the consent agenda

MOTION: To approve the consent agenda, excluding the Field Experience

By: E. Eaton

Seconded: C. Williams

Result: Motion carries unanimously

C. Approve the CNH May 2026 Field Experience to Washington, DC

Edit: Update the dates for the field experience; it should start on Tuesday, not Monday.

MOTION: To approve the CNH May 2026 Field Experience to Washington, DC, as Updated

By: E. Eaton

Seconded: C. Rossignol

V. Report of the Superintendent

Dr. Petrone provided several updates for the month, starting with the \$40 million emergency special education funding package put forward by the Senate to support excess cost funding. Unfortunately, Coventry did not receive the expected amount, with the first installment of \$205,160 arriving on 2/20, bringing us to 62.0%. However, if the \$40 million bill passes, the projected additional funding would total \$334,037, increasing our percentage to 75.8%. It was noted that if the governor vetoes the bill, the legislature has the power to override it.

Additionally, the district held the K-5 intervention meeting, where Dr. Petrone was impressed with the team's efforts to engage both students and parents. Planning is also underway for the Robert Plaster dedication ceremony, scheduled for 4/7/25. The search for the new CGS principal is in progress, with 34 candidates having been interviewed. Finally, Dr. Petrone announced that for the third consecutive year, we have received the Bonnie B. Carnie Award of Excellence.

V.A. Information: Board of Education Student Representative Report – Lillian O’Neil

Miss O’Neil provided an update on various high school activities, including the fact that both the girls’ and boys’ basketball teams won the championship. Additionally, the school play will be held on 3/6, 3/7, and 3/8.

V.B. Information: GHR Invention Convention (Deeper Thinking & Learning; Authentic Work) – Stacey Fortin and Cindy Wilbur

Ms. Fortin and Ms. Wilbur presented the GHR Invention Convention, which is available on the district’s website via the BoardBook portal.

Students Clara Tougas and Melissa Pascino showcased their inventions.

V.C. Information: New Kindergarten Age Requirements Process and Impact – Dr. Petrone and Dr. Hasty

Dr. Petrone and Dr. Hasty presented the New Kindergarten Age Requirement Process and its impact, which is available on the district’s website via the BoardBook portal.

C. Williams expressed concerns about the early admission process for kindergarten, noting that there is no clear policy in place, making the process highly subjective and lacking

established standards. She warned that this could cause widespread frustration among families, and emphasized that the impact on Hale would be limited to one year. She recommended discontinuing the early admission process and instead prioritizing admissions as outlined by Dr. Hasty. Dr. Petrone clarified that state law requires the district to allow parents the right to request early admission through written waiver and an assessment process. He will send the relevant public act to Board members for review. J. Beausoleil added that if any Board member wishes to vote on a policy change, they have a right to do so, as long as it does not conflict with state law. C. Williams suggested maintaining the September 1st cut-off date, but Dr. Petrone emphasized the district's obligation to comply with state law, which includes allowing assessments. C. Williams proposed phasing in automatic entry based on birth month. However, Dr. Petrone noted that parents were already informed last year about the automatic entry policy and how it would work moving forward. C. Williams also raised concerns about managing disputes related to the assessment process.

M. Kortmann inquired about the definition of a 3-year-old for admission next year. Dr. Hasty clarified that the cut-off for 3-year-olds will also be based on September 1st.

Dr. Petrone noted that, going forward, we will no longer extend the notice period to parents. If we end up with low enrollment in kindergarten, we will move a kindergarten teacher to first grade, as the rising kindergarten class is a larger group.

VI. Report of the Chairman

J. Beausoleil congratulated David Caruso, the new superintendent for Bolton, who was previously Dr. Petrone's intern. She also shared that she received an email from a community member regarding the recent jazz band concert. The email came from a parent whose son was deeply involved in the band and later became a professional musician. J. Beausoleil thanked the staff members who have been assisting with extra sessions during the challenges posed by long-term substitutes, emphasizing that the Board greatly appreciates their efforts. Bill 7067 was reviewed, and J. Beausoleil encouraged advocacy from community members to state representatives to support the bill. Board members have been invited to Senior Portfolio Night and asked attendees to RSVP. Additionally, she reminded everyone that Tuesday, March 4th, is the Town Manager's Budget hearing, followed by the Town Council Finance Committee meeting on March 10th. Finally, she noted that tomorrow is Rare Disease Stripe Day, a day to raise awareness, show support, and remind everyone of community members who are facing rare diseases.

VII. Communications

There were none.

VIII. VOTE: Approval of Minutes

VIII.A. Approve Minutes of February 13, 2025

Edits:

IV, last paragraph, last sentence – strike Triple C and replace with NCCC

IX.A - replace the term “security person” with “security liaison” throughout this section when referring to the current employee.

Page 4, paragraph three, first sentence – replace the term “implement a” with “enhance the.”

X.A, second paragraph – December 23rd should be referenced as a half-day, not full day off.

MOTION: To approve the Minutes of February 13, 2025, as amended

By: E. Eaton

Seconded: C. Rossignol

Result: Motion carries unanimously

IX. Old Business

IX. A. Information: FY2026 Budget

The Town Manager’s budget proposal and CIP are being presented tonight. Mr. Drumm has shared the budget with the Board and the Superintendent, along with his proposed CIP budget. There are some differences compared to what the Board originally submitted. Notably, the classroom furniture is not included, and we may need to figure out how to maintain consistency or consider skipping a year. The fire pump is not included in the first year but has been moved to the second year. School safety items are listed, totaling over \$800,000, though a significant number of these items will likely be funded through a bond. Additionally, the proposal includes network refresh and computer upgrades.

C. Williams inquired about the fire doors, prompting a discussion and review of the CIP sheet.

IX.B. Discussion: Review of Policy Revisions (To be warned for a vote at a future meeting.)

1. 4116.2 Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment – Workplace

We are reverting to the previous policy prior to the 2024 version.

C. Williams read Shipman's statement about reverting to the 2020 version. She asked if we would need to revert again in the future. Dr. Petrone explained that the guidelines require us to return to the 2020 version. He also noted that the law mandates a Title IX policy. It was reiterated that we are transitioning from the 2024 policy and reverting to the 2020 version.

Consensus to move forward to a vote

2. 4130 Social Media

It clarifies the distinction between personal and professional use of social media, as well as mixed use situations.

Consensus to move forward to a vote

3. 5125 Confidentiality and Access to Education Records (FERPA)

It clarifies the role of the district Title IX coordinator

Consensus to move forward to a vote

4. 5131 Title IX Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment

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Consensus to move forward to a vote

5. 5131.2 –Student Use of the District’s Computer Systems Internet Safety

It adds smart watches and e-readers to the policy and also addresses replacing language related to child-related.

There was a discussion about whether the policy defines the new vernacular. E. Eaton noted that the term is widely used and that we don’t typically define every term in every policy.

Consensus to move forward to a vote

6. 5131.4 Use of Private Technological Devices by Students

It adds smart watches and e-readers to the policy and also addresses replacing the language use of child-related content.

Consensus to move forward to a vote

7. 6146.1 Weighted Grading and Calculation of Grade Point Averages

Previously, class rank was used for eligibility; however, the new law establishes that the student's unweighted GPA will now be the determining factor.

Consensus to move forward to a vote

X. Report of Board Members

X.A. Information: District Wellness Committee Liaison Report, Meeting of February 27, 2025 – C. Rossignol

The group is working on developing the wellness statistical scoring system for the Board wellness policy. However, the host site is under construction, so could they were unable to enter the data. They reviewed the Board policy as well as other policies that needed to be linked.

**X.B. Information: Athletic Advisory Committee Report, Meeting of February 27, 2025
– E. Marchand**

Winter sports performed well, with the boys' team losing in the league semifinals but advancing to play in the state competition on Saturday at 2 p.m. The girls' team had an outstanding season, winning the NCCC, and will move on to states next Wednesday, playing at home. Wrestling numbers have been low, and the hockey co-op is also experiencing a decline in participation. One swimmer is currently competing with the Manchester team. The gym banners are being redone, and the conference banners will be completed this summer. The field will be renamed Bob Plaster Field, with signage funded entirely through donations. A new discus cage for the track team is being built, financed by profits from the Patriots game. There have also been requests for signage on the softball field. DATTCO has been doing an excellent job with team transportation. Coaching vacancies for the upcoming season have been filled. It was also noted that our coaches are among the lowest-paid statewide, and he has a desire to include a placeholder in the teachers' contract discussions to address this issue.

XI. Possible VOTE: Executive Session (Superintendent's Evaluation)

MOTION: Pursuant to CGS-1-200(c)(6)(A), the Board of Education will go into Executive Session for discussion related to superintendent's evaluation with the Superintendent present at 8:40 p.m.

By: C. Rossignol

Seconded: J. Cleary

Result: Motion carries unanimously

XII. Open Session

The Board of Education returned to Open Session at 9:07 p.m.

XIII. Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 9:08 p.m.

By: E. Eaton

Seconded: E. Marchand

Result: Motion carries unanimously

Respectfully Submitted:

Tricia Dean
Board Clerk

Approved: March 13, 2025