

ANSONIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION

PLACE: Meeting held at Mead School Cafeteria, 75 Ford Street, Ansonia, CT 06401

DATE: 19 February 2025 **TIME:** 6:30 p.m.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY: Mr. Rich Bshara, President.

I. OPENING

A. Pledge of Allegiance

B. **Roll Call** – Mr. Bshara called a quorum

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD	PRESENT	ABSENT	LATE
MR. RICH BSHARA, president	X		
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO	X		
MR. DAVID KNAPP	X		
MS. BETH LABERGE		X	
MS. OCASIO-GONZALEZ			X
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS	X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK	X		
TOTAL	5	1	1

II. Public Session

There was no one from the public who wished to address the Board.

III. Action items, consideration of approving the following items:

A. Ansonia Board of Education meeting minutes dated January 15, 2025 (organizational), January 15, 2025 (special).

MOTION: To accept meeting minutes dated January 15, 2025 (organizational), January 15, 2025 (special).

	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MR. RICH BSHARA, president		X		
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO		X		
MR. DAVID KNAPP	2	X		
MS. BETH LABERGE				
MS. OCASIO-GONZALEZ				
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS		X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK	1	X		
TOTAL		5	0	0

B. Ansonia Public Schools 2025-2026 School Calendar.

MOTION: To accept the Ansonia Public Schools 2025-2026 School Calendar.

	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MR. RICH BSHARA, president		X		

MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO	1	X		
MR. DAVID KNAPP		X		
MS. BETH LABERGE				
MS. OCASIO-GONZALEZ				
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS	2	X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK		X		
TOTAL		5	0	0

C. Certified appointment, Erin Murphy, Math Grade 8, Ansonia Middle School.

Discussion: Superintendent DiBacco said he interviewed Ms. Murphy and he is confident she will be a great addition to the Middle School. He said she is coming from Hartford school district and is very happy to be in Ansonia.

MOTION: To accept the certified appointment of Erin Murphy, Math Grade 8, Ansonia Middle School.

	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MR. RICH BSHARA, president		X		
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO		X		
MR. DAVID KNAPP	2	X		
MS. BETH LABERGE				
MS. OCASIO-GONZALEZ				
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS		X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK	1	X		
TOTAL		5	0	0

D. Ed-009 Agreement for Child Nutrition Program Authorization Signatures Change Form.

Discussion: Mr. Bshara said there are some changes that need to be made with the names on the Child Nutrition Program Authorization Signatures Change Form.

MOTION: To make changes to the Agreement for Child Nutrition Program Authorization Signatures Change Form.

	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MR. RICH BSHARA, president		X		
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO		X		
MR. DAVID KNAPP	2	X		
MS. BETH LABERGE				
MS. OCASIO-GONZALEZ				
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS	1	X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK		X		
TOTAL		5	0	0

IV. Informational Items.

A. South Korea Research Team Presentation

Tammy Adames, Assistant Principal at the high school greeted the Board. She said they were very fortunate to have Superintendent DiBacco and Mr. Bergin come to them with this opportunity. She said last spring a group of students did research as well as several Zoom Meetings with South Korea. She said the research continued into the fall along with the trip to South Korea with the senior student members. Ms. Adames introduced the group, Ms. Marsh, and Ms. Craven, the teachers who are mentoring the group. She said Mr. Wynne also attended the trip.

The group introduced themselves and greeted the Board. They told the Board all about their South Korea trip. They talked about the sixteen-hour plane ride, the décor in the towns, their shopping experiences, the cuisine they were able to try, and the architecture they saw. The group talked about the school they visited, clubs the school has, games they played, interesting features academics at the school, and the food they were able to try. The students were happy to share photos and talk about the amazing sightseeing, historic attractions, the history behind the areas they visited, and activities they participated in during their stay. The students each shared their experience and their projects to the Board, talking about the details of each day in South Korea. The students thanked the Board of Ed for allowing them the opportunity. Ms. Craven shared a video that was filmed during their trip.

They were asked how the students were chosen for the trip. Ms. Craven said the students needed to go through an application process.

Mr. Phipps asked if there were similarities between the South Korean students and our students. The group said there were similarities with the students in South Korea.

The Board thanked the group for sharing.

B. Student Representatives

Alleyanna Figueroa talked about some activities happening at the high school. She said the basketball season is ending and playoffs are going to begin, she gave a Student Pathways update, said the beginning of softball and baseball conditioning is happening, new on-line courses for students during their study hall period, Senior Day activities and fun next week, as well as the upcoming Talent Show. She told the Board, along with Ray Alvarez, she recently found out she won the CAPSS Award.

The Board congratulated Alleyanna.

C. Assistant Superintendent's Report

Mr. Bergin was not present. Questions should be sent to Mr. Bergin via email.

D. Special Education Director

Stephanie Savo gave the numbers for the Special Education Department. She talked about grade 3 Talented and Gifted testing for next school year, recent Professional Development Day activities, and the training held by Mr. Chris Brown from CBH focusing on anxiety in students. Ms. Savo also had updates on the Best Buddies Program and the Chargers Express Online Store.

Ms. DeLibero asked how often students are tested to see if they can come out of Special Ed.

Ms. Savo said every three years students are tested to see if they are eligible to exit Special Ed. She also said the students have yearly meetings to assess their progress and can test earlier if staff thinks it is necessary.

E. Technology Report

Mr. Pastore reviewed his report. He told the Board an application for category 1 funding was submitted and approved. He said this will allow for a Wi-Fi upgrade at the high school next month. Mr. Pastore said back in October the FCC launched a new E-Rate funded Cybersecurity Pilot Program to assist schools increase their Cybersecurity capabilities. He told the Board he applied and received notice that Ansonia was selected to participate in the program. He also spoke about the quarterly password reset and the latest Phishing campaign.

F. School Business Administrator Financials

1. 2024-2025 Year-to-Date

2. Grants and Other Income

Mr. Marriott greeted the Board. He said he refreshed several lines in the report. Mr. Marriott spoke briefly about the Transportation and Tuition line items. He also said they are expecting the first payment from the Excess Cost Grant funds, which will offset the \$2.7 million. Mr. Marriott said the topic of conversation around the state has been the cut in this funding. He said he has been working with Ms. Savo to adjust line items in the budget to deal with the cut in Excess Cost. He spoke about contract renewals coming up in June, as well as the existing copier contract that will be ending soon.

Mr. Phipps asked where we are in the new budget process.

Mr. Bshara said he has been sitting down with Mr. Bergin, Superintendent DiBacco, and Erich. He said Mr. Carey started the process and they are picking up the pieces. Mr. Bshara said the Excess Cost is tough. He told the Board, the 75% that was expected is now approximately 66%. He said this is about a \$600,000 decrease and they will have to find these funds this year for the following school year's budget. Mr. Bshara said they are trying to take account for the increase in transportation as well as others. He said the mayor put out a preliminary and they will continue to meet with city officials. Mr. Bshara said the city gets money through ECS for our funding and the number hasn't changed since 2008.

He also told the Board, the State delays approval for funds that are necessary to begin the school year. He said it affects our district more than most due to our high Special Education numbers. He said they are also working on the medical line to offset some of the expense.

Discussion was held regarding the State and their process.

Mr. Bshara said the Board will be updated as soon as any information is available.

Mr. Marriott said they will also be looking for small savings on larger line items which will make an impact.

Superintendent DiBacco spoke to the Board about the frustrations trying to manage the budget. He said the district needs more money from the state, bottom line.

Ms. DeLibero stressed the frustration for taxpayers having to make up the huge cost for the students.

She also asked if it is possible to get Kara Rochelle and Jorge Cabrera here to explain the situation in our district. Mr. Bshara said if the Board wants to have a special meeting, he would be good with that.

Alleyanna Figueroa stressed the importance of keeping programs that are benefiting our students and she thinks it is a good idea to have a meeting with representatives from the state.

Mr. Bshara said they will come up with some options.

G. Food Service Director's Report

Mr. Kevin Benham went over his monthly report. He gave the Board his numbers and told the Board about what is going on in the department this month.

H. Athletic Director's Report.

Mr. Bshara said any questions can be directed to Mr. Brockett.

I. Enrollment

Mr. Bshara went over the Enrollment Report noting the increase.

J. Youth Family Outreach Summary

Mr. Lisi was not present. Any questions should be directed to Mr. Lisi.

K. Facilities Director's Report

Mr. Evans gave his report. He talked about an issue at the Middle School regarding two roof top units that had cracked heat exchangers. He said they replaced the units without any incidents. Mr. Evans also talked about the application process for the high school roofing project. He said they hope to move on to the next step as soon as possible after receiving the accepted fund letter today. He said the schools are getting older and mechanical systems are beginning to fail. He said grant money has helped with some replacements and they maintain, but the need to replace will be coming up.

L. Director of Equity and Communications Report.

Dr. Morales said they wrote a \$10,000 grant request to Valley Community Foundation to help fund the Atlanta trip. He said he also collaborated with Valley NAACP to find funds for a trip with our NAACP Jr. Club to a New Haven Museum. Dr. Morales said expulsion numbers are down.

M. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent DiBacco greeted the Board. He said he wanted to highlight on what Mr. Evans shared about the roofing project application that was put in. He said the applications are not easy and there is a lot of going back and forth and he was very happy to get the reward letter for it. Superintendent DiBacco said they went to a Legislative Breakfast and there was a lot of information shared. He said we have so many programs for our Special Education students created in district that we have done all on our own. He told the Board there is no incentive, since funds aren't coming back to Ansonia. He said other districts are sharing the same frustration. Superintendent DiBacco said it is a constant process asking for reimbursements for the amazing opportunities we offer our students. He told the Board everyone involved in Ansonia has been wonderful but it is getting more difficult. He also said aside from that, there are so many things to celebrate in this district and he would like to continue.

He thanked the Board and city for their support.

N. Additional; Administration or Board of Education.

Superintendent DiBacco and Mr. Bshara gave a brief update on the Library. They said Ms. Shuart does an amazing job at the Library.

V. EXECUTIVE SESSION regarding expulsions.

MOTION: To enter into Executive Session regarding Expulsions at 8:00p.m.

	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MR. RICH BSHARA, president		X		
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO		X		
MR. DAVID KNAPP	1	X		
MS. BETH LABERGE				
MS. OCASIO-GONZALEZ		X		
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS		X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK		X		
TOTAL		6	0	0

Return to regular meeting.

VI. Action, as needed, as a result of Executive Session.

MOTION: To accept the recommendations as presented by the Superintendent regarding expulsions.

	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MR. RICH BSHARA, president		X		
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO		X		
MR. DAVID KNAPP		X		
MS. BETH LABERGE				
MS. OCASIO-GONZALEZ		X		
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS	1	X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK		X		
TOTAL		6	0	0

VII. Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 8:05p.m.

	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MR. RICH BSHARA, president		X		
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO		X		
MR. DAVID KNAPP		X		
MS. BETH LABERGE				
MS. OCASIO-GONZALEZ		X		
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS		X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK		X		
TOTAL		6	0	0

Respectfully submitted,

Cassie Venson

Cassie Venson

Recording Secretary

Date: 2/27/2025