

ANSONIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION

PLACE: Meeting held at Robert E. Zuraw Admin. Building, 42 Grove Street

DATE: 13 September 2023 **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		
MS. FRAN DIGIORGI	X		
MR. DAVID KNAPP		X	
MS. BETH LABERGE	X		
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS	X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK	X		
TOTAL	6	1	0

Mr. Bshara asked everyone to remain standing for a moment of silence for retired school nurse, Mrs. Maryann Ahearn who recently passed.

Chargers Champions Recognition

A. 2024 Teacher of the Year, Shelley Hydar, Mead School.

Mrs. Crooks told the Board, Ms. Hydar has received recognition from this program before. She said Shelley Hydar is this year's teacher of the year. Mrs. Crooks said she is an amazing educator and the district is very lucky to have her. Mrs. Crooks said Ms. Hydar was previously awarded this recognition and she is the first two-time recipient. Mrs. Crooks told the Board again of all the amazing things Ms. Hydar continues to do with the Special Need students at Mead School. She said Shelley is a pillar of hope, strength, and inspiration. Mrs. Crooks presented Shelley with a golden apple as a symbolize this year's award.

B. 2024 Paraprofessional of the Year, Rose Marie Saleh.

Mrs. Crooks said Rose works at Prendergast. Mrs. Crooks said Ms. Saleh is an exceptional educator. She told the Board she is so helpful, warm, and patient. Mrs. Crooks said a student wrote a very heartfelt note about Ms. Saleh. Mrs. Crooks presented Rose with a certificate and Chargers Champions jacket. The Board congratulated Ms. Saleh.

Mr. Bshara asked for a motion to amend the agenda to add minutes of the Special Meeting held on September 5, 2023, which was the Alliance District Grant meeting.

MOTION: To amend the agenda to add the meeting minutes dated September 5, 2023 (special).

	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MR. RICH BSHARA, president		X		
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO		X		
MS. FRAN DIGIORGI		X		
MR. DAVID KNAPP				
MS. BETH LABERGE	1	X		
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS	2	X		

MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK		X		
TOTAL		6	0	0

II. Public Session

There were no comments from the public.

Mr. Bshara said he wanted to recognize Coach Brockett for 194 wins. He said coach has been here since 2006 and Coach Hunt and Coach McAllister before that, all having very winning careers. He said there is a long history of titles and the school should be proud of that. He congratulated Coach Brockett.

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

A. Ansonia Board of Education meeting minutes dated June 21, 2023), and September 5, 2023 (special).

MOTION: To accept the meeting minutes dated June 21, 2023 (regular) and September 5, 2023 (special).

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

B. Child Nutrition Programs Authorized Signatures Change Form (ED 099).

Mr. Bshara said we need to approve Mr. Charles Carey, Business Manager/HR Director taking over for Rick Belden.

MOTION: To add Charles Carey, Business Manager/HR Director to authorize and sign claims for reimbursement for the Connecticut State Department of Education Nutrition and Family Services.

	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MR. RICH BSHARA, president		X		
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO		X		
MS. FRAN DIGIORGI		X		
MR. DAVID KNAPP				
MS. BETH LABERGE	2	X		
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS		X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK	1	X		
TOTAL		6	0	0

IV. Informational Items.

A. Assistant Superintendent's Report

Mr. Bergin said he wanted to start by sharing about the start of the school year. He said this was one of the smoothest openings for the district that he has been a part of. Mr. Bergin said there has been nothing but positive feedback from parents, administrators, and teachers. He said he wanted to share on the South Korea collaborative project. Mr. Bergin told the Board, they were approached by ACES with an opportunity to partner with two schools in South Korea. He said after meeting with administrators, they secured 10 students and the staff needed for this opportunity. He said they were very pleased to see such a response from our high school staff as well as students. Mr. Bergin said they are extremely excited. He said the kickoff meeting will be tomorrow and he will keep everyone posted. He said the team will be invited to Seoul for the international conference.

Mr. Bshara said he was very impressed with the choice of schools from Connecticut that were chosen along with Ansonia for this opportunity.

Mr. Bergin agreed and told the Board, other schools that were asked to join were Cheshire, Avon, Newtown, and a few Magnet Schools. Mr. Bergin said it's great to be now recognized and chosen among affluent schools such as these. Mr. Bergin said only 20 schools in the entire country were chosen. He said it is so very impressive and these students are going to witness an amazing experience. He said this project is just the start of the relationship.

Mr. Bergin told the Board about plans for Professional Development. He talked about the new Teacher Evaluation process. He said the team is working with ACES and he will keep the Board updated on this process.

Mr. Phipps asked how the cell phone policy has been going and if there has been a lot of pushback. Mr. Bergin said it has been great. He told Mr. Phipps, at the Middle School and High School, students are able to keep their phones and they are just going into a pouch during class time.

Superintendent DiBacco said he agrees the policy has been working. He said during passing and lunch, students are able to use their phones and they have been fine with that.

B. Special Education Director’s Report

Discussion: Mrs. Stephanie Savo gave her report. She said 451 students are identified as receiving Special Education Services. She said the district is at 16.7% which is lower than the state level. Ms. Savo gave the details of her monthly report, talking about the Middle School satellite PCRC Program, Pre-K referrals, the Best Buddies Program, and what has been going on in the Special Ed classes throughout the district.

Mrs. Savo said their on-line store is up and running, she said it is called Charger Express. She said orders are coming in and they are getting put together by students from the Middle School and High School. Mrs. Savo told the Board she will be working with Ms. Calabrese on the Talented and Gifted Program.

Ms. Varoschak asked what the age would be for TAG. Ms. Savo said right now 3rd grade will be the start.

C. Technology Report.

Mr. Vin Pastore gave his report to the Board. He said throughout the summer the department refurbished all chrome books and carts, he said over the summer he implemented a Wi-Fi management system called Clear Pass. He said it gives control over Wi-Fi and students cannot login using Wi-Fi anymore. He said there are Verizon signals that students may be able to get at the high school, due to the extenders because it is the emergency center for the town. He said it also gives control for guest access. He said it has been working very well. He said the first phishing campaign was a success at 8.5%.

D. School Business Administrator Financials

- 1. 2023-2024 Year-to-Date
- 2. Grants and Other Income

Mr. Chuck Carey gave his report, he said it has been a great three and a half months and everyone has been very helpful. He provided the financial report and explained the details. He said spending looked pretty good at this point and the only line item looking over, will be the liability insurance as they are waiting for the Food Service Department reimbursement. He told the Board has been working closely with Stephanie balancing the Special Ed numbers.

Mr. Carey talked about the budget transfers that were made and the new Paraprofessional deductible assistance program for paras who have our HSA. He said these employees will now receive money from the state beginning in October.

There were no questions.

MOTION: To approve the budget transfers.

	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MR. RICH BSHARA, president				X
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO		X		
MS. FRAN DIGIORGI		X		

MR. DAVID KNAPP				
MS. BETH LABERGE	2	X		
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS		X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK	1	X		
TOTAL		5	0	1

There was brief conversation regarding grants, and estimates were given about upcoming numbers and deadlines.

E. Food Service Director's Report

Mr. Kevin Benham gave his Profit and Loss report details, along with the other expense reports for the Food Service Department. He said the renovation and refresh for Mead School cafeteria was completed over the summer and they are getting a lot of positive feedback.

There were no questions.

F. Athletic Director's Report.

Mr. Bshara asked the Board to refer to the report that was handed in and direct any questions to Mr. Brockett.

G. Enrollment

Superintendent DiBacco shared the enrollment details with the Board. He talked about the increase, especially the High School and Middle School.

Mr. Phipps talked about the high numbers of students coming in within a very short period of time.

There was discussion about the reasons why so many students are coming into district. Superintendent DiBacco said many are residents coming in from out of state for the affordable housing.

H. Youth Family Outreach Summary

Mr. Bob Lisi presented his report. He talked about the high number of newly registered students. He said, as usual, many are from lower DRG. Mr. Lisi said the numbers would be lower if it was possible to add in the out of state students. He also talked about the majority receiving Special Ed services. Mr. Lisi said it is surprising how in the last five years the change in neighborhoods. He said it is a negative change, especially within the multifamily housing. He said 50% are multifamily and the neighborhoods do not look the same.

Mr. Lisi talked about the positive relationship and success with the Juvenile Review Board.

Mr. Lisi said lastly, he wanted to acknowledge Shawn Venson. He said Shawn is head of the local Masons in Ansonia. He said the district has always had a back to school kick off with supplies for students. Mr. Lisi said this year the funds were not made available and they were scrambling. Bob said he approached Shawn and his group delivered about 200 backpacks and school supplies. He said our kids are in need and they stepped up and it was something to see. Mr. Lisi said he talked to Shawn and maybe next year will be a bit bigger.

Mr. Bshara asked if there is something we can do to show appreciation. Superintendent said he will be writing a letter, and it was great to be able to have them just ask what was needed and they delivered.

I. Facilities Director's Report

Mr. Bob Evans, Facilities Director, said it is actually great to see Chuck Carey so very involved. He said Mr. Carey has gotten in the trenches and up on roofs. He said his department was able to get everything completed on time over summer break. He thanked Shari and Stephanie for moving staff and students around so the department could get the work done. He talked about two retirements and hiring replacements happening for a full staff. He thanked the staff and administration for all their help, as well as Chuck and Bridget for assisting with the Grant funding.

Mr. Bshara said there will be a referendum for the town, a lot is Board of Education, including a new school as well as Maintenance improvements. He said at some point they would like a video tour or open house so taxpayers can see what is trying to be done for the schools.

J. Director of Equity and Communications Report

Dr. Reese Morales talked about the many beginning of school activities. He talked about the National Hispanic Heritage month contest that will take place. He said Superintendent DiBacco said they will begin to send out a weekly district newsletter on Thursdays. Dr. Morales also thanked all involved in the back to school supplies give away.

Mr. Bshara asked if he will be doing the college tour again this year. Dr. Morales said he would love to do the black college tour again and they are planning.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent DiBacco said there were 208 students that left the district and returned. He said he gives Bob Evans for making the inside and outside of the buildings look great for the start of school. He talked about the international experience our high school students will be able to take part in. He said the opportunities are head and shoulder above anyone else. He said among the districts chosen, you don't normally see Ansonia included. He told the

Board while attending a Sikorsky event, two graduated high school students were offered a full-time job on the spot. Superintendent DiBacco said Chuck Carey is doing a great job and he is happy with his reports. He talked about the smart decision made by Tom Brockett to play football last week when everyone postponed due to the heat. Superintendent DiBacco also said Tom takes no credit for beating Coach Hunt's record. He told the Board Tom will continually say it's a testament to the community, the coaches, the youth coaches, all the legendary coaches before him and the student athletes and their families. Superintendent DiBacco thanked the Board for their support, as well as the PTO and families, and now Best Buddies for making uniforms. He said he is very proud to see our kids getting jobs in Sikorsky, students taking classes and making connections with South Korea, as well as a great start of the school year.

There was more talk about Coach Brockett and the respect he instills into the student athletes. He told the Board we got the right guy for the job, he is the most winningest coach in the state.

Ms. LaBerge asked if we will be offering the Vision to Learn Program. Superintendent said he will look into this.

V. Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 7:43 p.m.

	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MR. RICH BSHARA, president		X		
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO	2	X		
MS. FRAN DIGIORGI		X		
MR. DAVID KNAPP				
MS. BETH LABERGE		X		
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS		X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK	1	X		
TOTAL		6	0	0

Respectfully submitted,

Cassie Venson

Cassie Venson

Recording Secretary

Date: 9/15/2023