

ANSONIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION

PLACE: Ansonia High School, Media Center, via Zoom **DATE:** 08 September 2021 **TIME:** 6:30 P.M..
MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY: Mr. Chris Phipps, President

I. OPENING

A. Pledge of Allegiance

B. Roll Call – Mr. Phipps called a quorum

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD	PRESENT	ABSENT	LATE
MR. RICH BSHARA	X		
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO	X		
MS. FRAN DIGIORGI	X		
MS. BETH LEBERGE	X		
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS, president	X		
MR. VINNY SCARLATA		X	
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK	X		
TOTAL	6	1	0

Chargers Champions Recognition Program

Ansonia High School students were honored tonight during the first installment of the Chargers Champions Recognition Program. The program was developed to recognize students and/or staff who go above and beyond, and have shown their commitment to excellence through dedication, leadership, and innovation.

Mrs. Sara Crooks, Director of Social and Emotional Learning, presented certificates to these students who have shown their commitment by attending a two-week Engineering Academy sponsored by Gateway Community College's School of Engineering. This program took place in late June and early July.

Miguel Zapata, Sabrina Ortega, Briana Dear, Paul Palmer, Samantha Burton, Richmond Martinez, Hailey Burton, Anthony Sullivan, and Landon Kerr were recognized.

Mrs. Crooks also gave a shout out to Mr. Karen Phipps, AHS CTE Lead Teacher, for securing this partnership with GCC, which allowed the students to attend the camp at no cost. Mrs. Crooks also thanked Mrs. Christine Davis, AHS English Lead Teacher, and Ms. Wendy Chin, AHS School Counselor, for accompanying the students over the two weeks. Mrs. Crooks also thanked Dr. DiBacco, Mr. Bergin, and Mr. Giansanti for consistently placing emphasis on the importance of real-world opportunities like this for our students. She said the administration works hard to secure quality programs for our students and encourage staff to seek out and secure opportunities like this, which are life-changing opportunities for the students.

II. Public Session

Mr. Phipps asked if there was anyone from the public who wished to speak.

Mr. Jeremy Musnicki, 16 Holbrook Street, said he has several concerns. Mr. Musnicki said he has three students. He said two students are in district, and one student is outplaced at ACES, North Haven. Mr. Musnicki said he is having issues with transportation and he is trying to figure out what is going on. He said he is being told paperwork was not sent in for transportation. Mr. Musnicki said his student's school started earlier than Ansonia school district. He said the school had to come to pick his student up, because Ansonia did not make arrangements. He said his student has been late for school and will soon be missing school due to lack of transportation. He said due to behavioral issues, his student has missed school in the past, and is now missing because of transportation. He said there is a problem where pick up should be with his Middle School student. Mr. Musnicki said he is getting complaints from people in the community about transportation problems in general. He said people are not happy and it is not working. Mr. Phipps thanked Mr. Musnicki, and said the Board hears him, and someone will be in touch with him regarding his issues.

Ms. Dawn Ossie, 105 Wakelee Avenue told the Board she has a concern with Covid tracing on the buses. She said there is no way to see exactly who came in contact with who, because the kids do not have assigned seating. Mr. Phipps said he is being told there is supposed to be assigned seating on all buses. Ms. Ossie said she knows it's supposed to be Kindergarten in the front, and upper grades in the back. Ms. Ossie said another concern she is having is bus safety. She said she brought this up and went toe to toe with Mr. Lisi about the Bus Safety Program. She said the principals thought bus safety was not necessary. Ms. Ossie said she was told bus safety would be done, and it hasn't happened yet. She said her fifth grade student does not know how to get the door open if there is an emergency. Ms. Ossie said nobody seems to have a problem with this. She said there was about 30 kids from each school for The Bus Safety Program, and they were grateful for it. She said the safety of our children isn't a priority and children aren't given proper tools, if they were put in a dangerous situation. Mr. Phipps thanked her, and said student safety is the number one priority.

Mr. Phipps said there are two action items that are late, and is asking to add them to the agenda.

MOTION: To add two action items to the agenda.

	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MR. RICH BSHARA	1	X		

MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO	2	X		
MS. FRAN DIGIORGI		X		
MS. BETH LEBERGE		X		
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS, president		X		
MR. VINNY SCARLATA				
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK		X		
TOTAL		6	0	

III. Action items, of approving the following items

A. Ansonia Board of Education meeting minutes dated June 16, 2021 (special), June 23, 2021 (special), July 22, 2021, and August 2, 2021 (special).

MOTION: To accept the meeting minutes dated June 16, 2021 (special), June 23, 2021 (special), July 22, 2021, and August 2, 2021 (special).

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

B. 1. To adopt the proposed Ansonia Board of Education Vaccination and Weekly Testing Policy as required by Executive Order setting Covid-19 Vaccination and testing requirements for Board of Education employees and contractors.

Ms. Rebecca Adams, Director of Human Relations and Labor Relations, said this order requires all staff and contractors, to either be vaccinated or tested weekly, presenting a negative test result. She said there is a plan in place to implement this process. She said Ms. DiGiorgi and she went through the entire policy that will go into effect on September 27, 2021. Ms. Adams said she is happy to address any questions. Mr. Bergin said the district is currently working with Griffin Hospital regarding a test site where our staff will be able to go for testing. Ms. Varoschak asked if they think this will have an impact on unmasking moving forward. Mr. Bergin said these are executive orders and he really does not know how it will affect any of that.

MOTION: To adopt the proposed Ansonia Board of Education Vaccination and Weekly Testing Policy as required by Executive Order setting Covid-19 Vaccination and testing requirements for Board of Education employees and contractors.

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

2. To adopt and replace Covid-19 policies adopted for the 2020-2021 school year with the proposed Ansonia Board of Education Policy as required by current SDE/DPH requirements for Protocols during the Covid-19 Health Emergency/Pandemic, including mask requirements.

Ms. Adams said this policy is consistent with the policies that were passed in August of last year. She said this is to make it consistent with what is now required. She said policies are not changing, they are only moving toward requirements.

Mr. Rich Bshara thanked Ms. DiGiorgi and Ms. Adams for their hard work.

MOTION: To adopt and replace Covid-19 policies adopted for the 2020-2021 school year with the proposed Ansonia Board of Education Policy as required by current SDE/DPH requirements for Protocols during the Covid-19 Health Emergency/Pandemic, including mask requirements

	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MR. RICH BSHARA	1	X		
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO		X		
MS. FRAN DIGIORGI		X		

MS. BETH LEBERGE	2	X		
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS, president		X		
MR. VINNY SCARLATA				
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK		X		
TOTAL		6	0	

C. To continue Assistant Superintendent Stephen Bergin's appointment as Acting Superintendent, pursuant to the terms of the motion passed at the August 2, 2021 Special Meeting of the Ansonia Board of Education until Dr. DiBacco's return or the Board takes other action.

Mr. Phipps said as much as they want Superintendent DiBacco back, and are thinking of him every day; Mr. Bergin and team are doing a great job. Ms. Voroschak thanked Mr. Bergin as well.

MOTION: To continue Assistant Superintendent Stephen Bergin's appointment as Acting Superintendent, pursuant to the terms of the motion passed at the August 2, 2021 Special Meeting of the Ansonia Board of Education until Dr. DiBacco's return or the Board takes other action.

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

4. Informational Items.

A. Special Education Director's Report

Mr. Kevin Keating, Special Education Director, explained in detail, the monthly report including Special Education Students numbers and the Special Education evaluation process. He said the summer program was very successful, including the student teachers that come from Southern Connecticut State University at no cost.

B. Technology Report

Mr. Pastore gave his report; he briefed the Board on all the activity happening throughout the district in the Technology Department. There were no questions

C. School Business Administrator Financials

Mr. Rick Belden, interim Finance Director, summarized the report that was provided in the packet. He said all required state reports have been submitted. He told the Board these reports are audited and he will be working closely to complete the project. He said this is the second year of using the Infinite Visions Program. Mr. Belden said it is his goal to have a complete balance for the city, using the program. He said next month's report would be much more detailed. There were no questions. Mr. Phipps thanked Mr. Belden.

1. 2020-2021 Year-to-Date
2. Athletics
3. Food Service
4. Grants and other income

D. Enrollment

Mr. Phipps told the Board this report is included in the package.

E. Youth and Family Outreach –

Mr. Bob Lisi said there were quite a few home visits this month, most are due to chronic absenteeism. He said it was a challenge for the families as well as the staff during the pandemic, including poor attendance. Mr. Lisi said there were 257 students move into the district. Mr. Lisi told the Board he also handles transportation, and said he is on the phone with All-star approximately two to three times each day. He said there is a severe bus shortage across the country. He said Steve Gardner, the General Manager of All-star, told him districts across the nation are in the grips of a bus shortage. Mr. Lisi said our process has greatly improved from August when school first started. He said the company is trying to get drivers, along with everyone else. He said the first day was a nightmare and he returned over 50 phone calls. Mr. Lisi said he cannot accommodate everyone or make every parent happy. He said door-to-door service is not possible; the buses would never get to school. He said the bus company is doing to best they can. He said they are 77 passenger buses and the highest number of students is 52. Mr. Lisi said he and Mr. Bergin are at the schools every morning at drop off, and 90% of students are wearing a mask. He said if they are not wearing a mask, they get a mask as soon as they get off the bus. He said the drop off in the morning has also tremendously improved.

Ms. Voroschak asked if the bus drivers could get masks to give to students. Mr. Lisi said all buses were supplied with masks.

F. Facilities Director's Report

Mr. Bob Evans went over his monthly report. He told the Board his staff continues to work very hard. He talked about projects that are moving slow, due to materials being on backorder. He said his staff gets the credit for their hard work over the summer.

There were no questions. Mr. Phipps thanked Mr. Evans and his crew for their efforts.

G. Director of Human Resources and Labor Relations Report.

Ms. Rebecca Adams gave her report. There were no questions.

H. Acting Superintendent's Report

Mr. Steve Bergin, acting Superintendent, thanked the staff, students, parents, and administration for pivoting and making the necessary adjustments for the start of this school year. He said it was amazing to walk through the buildings and reconnect. He told the Board he felt day one was great, minus the transportation. Mr. Bergin said behind the scenes from custodial staff and IT Department is what makes it successful. He said no one would know the challenges these departments faced. He explained the broken down bus day one and a minor bus accident on day two. Mr. Bergin said there are many more parent drop offs than usual this year, which may add to the congestion. He said he is so very proud to be a part of the team Dr. DiBacco has put together, they are working tirelessly. He said Central Office phones are always open and calls will get to the right person. He said RULER social and emotional component is beginning to be implemented and he could not be happier. He told the Board Mrs. Sara Crooks will be bringing this piece to schools, and it is proving to have a positive impact on the climate for the staff as well as the students. Mr. Bergin said foremost, the safety of the students is the number one priority.

I. Additional; Administration or Board of Education

Dr. Reese Morales, Director of Equity and Communications, thanked everyone for the warm welcome to the district. He told the Board he had the great opportunity to work with the Middle School Unified Arts Teachers. He said the team would continue to discuss sensitivity, diversity, equity and inclusion. He said he is working on parent contact by reaching out through social media as well as Parent Square. He said he has met with many staff members and thanked them all for discussing the many strengths and weaknesses they observe. He said diversity is the strength in this district and he will focus on parent involvement. Mr. Phipps thanked Mr. Morales for being on the team.

Mr. Tom Brockett said they are very excited to kick off the athletic season. He said the staff and athletes are doing a great job following the safety guideline and he is confident they will keep the athletes safely on the field. Mr. Brockett said he recently met with NVL and every district is experiencing shortages with coaching, officials, and bus transportation. He thanked parents for their cooperation and said he appreciates how accommodating they have been. Mr. Brockett said he believes kids need to be playing sports in this community.

Mr. Phipps gave a regionalization update. He told the Board there is a bump in the path regarding the three-school model versus four-school model. He said either way, from a finance perspective; Ansonia will be paying an additional \$800 thousand dollars or an additional \$500 thousand dollars. Mr. Bshara said the finance piece is not beneficial to Ansonia at this time. He said they are nearing the end to see if this is a go or not and they will see what happens.

Ms. Voroschak asked why it was not a savings for Ansonia, because she thought it was going to save taxpayers money. Mr. Phipps said Ansonia spends approximately \$16,000/per student, and Derby spends approximately \$18,000/per student. He said this would be the reason Ansonia would be paying more for the regionalization of schools.

V. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 7:45 P.M..

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

Respectfully submitted,

Cassie Venson

Cassie

Venson

Recording Secretary

Date: 9/14/2021