

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
CANTERBURY, CONNECTICUT**

Date: Tuesday, April 9, 2019

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Place: Dr. Helen Baldwin Middle School-Media Center

Approved 5-14-2019

A. Call of Quorum and Pledge of Allegiance

Attendance : Vivian Thumser, Chairperson; John Gentry, Co-Chair; Nancy Duvall, Secretary; Walt Petruniw; Tom Dufort; Bridgett LaBrecque, Leticia Velasquez

Left Early: Bridgett LaBrecque

Administration: Dr. Lois DaSilva-Knapton, Superintendent; Sarah Cary, Principal CES; Ryan Earley, Principal BMS; Jeff Ferranti, Pupil Service Director; Michele Demicco, Director of Finance and Operations.

Guests:

Vivian Thumser called the Board of Education meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

B. Special Purpose/ Recognition

1. **BMS Presentations** – Mrs. Meredina, Grade 5/6 Science Teacher, student presentation on molecules, chosen was the molecules the students use the most: Water. Next was another student presentation summarizing the Grade 7/8 National Junior Honor Society Induction Ceremony, what took place, listed the values of the NJHS, and that there were three 8th grade students and twelve 7th grade students were inducted. Mrs. Rizer and Mr. Beets discussed the Evening of the Arts, with the theme of “Heros” which is taking place on May 3rd from 6-8pm at BMS.

C. Comments from Visitors

1. Jamie Lee expressed her concern with the two recent tragedies that have impacted the town, the passing of Donna Green and the accident impacting Rebecca Matteau and her family. Also concern for the bus situation and statements made to the media regarding the situation and timeline. Stressed that everything that happens in the

town related to the school system is ultimately the responsibility of the Superintendent. Has stressed her concerns about the Superintendent since August and

has not received transparency on any of the issues. She also stated that she thinks the Superintendent should resign, she has lost the trust of the town and parents. Asks the BOE to consider removing her. States that the Principals and Special Ed Director are the best things that have happened to this town and they should be valued. Mentions disrespect given to Heather Graveline at the BOF budget meeting.

2. Walt Petruniw mentions certain may have “crossed a line” with public statements and Vivian T. sites **Policy 1312 – Community Relations: Public Comments**, and how this policy should be used for complaints.
3. Heather Graveline discusses the surveys and the Special Ed Directors position; how she asked specifically about the SED position and if that would be all set and the first response was a “yes” but at a second meeting was told a new committee would be formed to find a new SED. She finds this appalling to handle it this way as she was on the first committee to find the current SED and how doing this again after only one year will affect the children and all the families directly served. Mentions her letter she sent in and is asked to read it to everyone present.
4. Brittany Mellow informs the BOE of an incident that happened at CES on March 20th, her 7 year old son had an incident at school, witnessed by many, but was told he was fine but when she arrived to pick him up she was told to get him checked out, at the ER she was told he had a mild concussion and broken wrist. And even now, weeks later still has a large bump on his head and black eyes. Why was the severity of his injuries been shrugged off and why did she not receive any answers of exactly what happened and why so long to get any information at all. Stated that the Superintendent guided her in what to say and how to proceed with getting answers. Also had nothing but good things to say about Jeff F., the current SED with her dealings with him for her other child.
5. Parent stresses the need for something to be done with the Drop Off/ Pickup parking lot situation at CES and how Ms. Carey is always out there to help out when she can but never sees the Superintendent there to witness the issues to find a resolution. States that a friend of hers emailed the Superintendent regarding this issue in December but has not received a response.

D. Presentations & Actions:

1. **2019-2020 School Calendar (final)** – there will be a few changes to the PD days but other than that it aligns with Eastconn schedule.

Motion: To accept the 2019/2020 School Calendar with PD amendments

By: Tom Dufort

Second: John Gentry

All in Favor

Motion passes

2. **BOE 8th Grade Award Discussion**

Vivian T. would like to reinstate the BOE award that was given at graduation in the past. Funding was discussed as well as retaining the name or renaming the award. To be carried over to next BOE meeting.

3. **Resignation / Retirement Letters**

Thomas Brophy resigning at the end of this school year, as well as, Betty Lima, also resigning at the end of this year. Betty Lima has been with CPS for over 50 years.

Motion: To accept the resignation letters mentioned above

By: John Gentry

Second: Tom Dufort

All in Favor

Motion passes

4. **Policies First Read**

- a. **4112.4 Health Examination**

Motion: To accept Policy 4112.4 as first read

By: Walt Petruniw

Second: Tom Dufort

All in Favor

Motion passes

5. Policies Second Read

a. 5141.21 Administering Medication

Motion: To accept Policy 4112.4 as a second read with changes discussed

By: Walt Petruniw

Second: Nancy Duvall

All in Favor

Motion passes

6. 2019-20 School Health and Nutrition Program Certification

Superintendent Knapton reiterates the Healthy School strict guidelines and rules for certification. . . motions required.

Motion: Pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the board of education or governing authority certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the school under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to , school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or by non-school organizations and groups.

By: Walt Petruniw

Second: Tom Dufort

All in Favor

Motion passes

Motion: The Board of Education or governing authority will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards provided that the following conditions are met: 1. The sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2. The sale is at the location of the event; and 3. The food items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The “regular school day” is the period

from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day.
“Location” means where the event is being held.

By: John Gentry
Second: Walt Petruniw
All in Favor
Motion passes

E. Committee Reports / Correspondence to the Board

1. **Para-Educator Negotiations:** Many cancellations by the Union has lead to no further movement – Next meeting is tentative for End of April
2. **Secretaries Negotiations:** Ratification needed – should be finalized by next BOE meeting
3. **2018/2019 Budget:** The financial update regarding the current years overages and the amount that will be requested at the BOF meeting on April 10th. As of March 28th, the overage is projected to be \$300,703.53. Also on the BOF schedule for tomorrow night is the Q&A session for next years proposed budget.
4. **Facility Committee:**
 - **Oil Tank Project** – waiting on plans from engineer in order to move forward
 - **BMS Roof Project** - the first reimbursement from State has been received – the balance should be received shortly, then the decision has to be made about the balance of the loan. Whether to keep paying that or pay off.
5. **Policy Committee:** Next meeting April 23rd
6. **EASTCONN:** slated to go paperless, have Chromebooks for available for use by members. Sees values in retreats, will schedule them more often.
7. **Finance Sub Committee:** no new meetings held
8. **Curriculum/Pupil Services Committee:** discussed curriculum aligning at last meeting
9. **Superintendents’ Report:**
 - a. **Enrollment:** 757 currently – few changes at high school level
 - b. **Administrators Report** –

1. **BMS:** 8th graders participated in the NAEP test, districts are chosen at random to participate in this test. Food Drive was held. Funds were requested from the CEF for materials needed. Coach changes were noted for spring sports, with 75 students participating. P/T Conferences were held. 8th Grade Recognition Ceremony is Friday, June 7th at BMS.
 2. **CES:** Family Fun Nights continue, this time it's on Saturday, later in date due to Opening day of baseball. Kids Lab continues, funding from Pfizer. Rain Garden project should be started this spring, there was a parent volunteer to head this up.
 3. **Pupil Services** – will have a Facebook page for updates only, no comments will be allowed. Looking for ways to update programming. Safety Care is a program that is being looked at as well as other programs. Much research is being done to try to hold down the unexpected transportation costs.
- c. **Woodstock Academy** – March Head of School Award - Canterbury student winner – Waverly Dombrowski
- d. **Additional Comments** – Superintendent Knapton presented the timeline of the Bus Registration Issue. Timeline is dated April 4, 2019. The first notification was sent to the Superintendents' office on March 28th at 1:44 pm by Principal Early. There was some confusion as the registrations show they are valid until 8/31/19 and there are no registration costs for municipalities so the registration also shows no fees are due. Research was done over the weekend and it was not until Tuesday, April 2nd, after a call to the DMV, it was in fact confirmed that the buses were not registered and the decision was made to ground the fleet. Copies of registrations were passed around for viewing. Superintendent Knapton stated that on May 5, 2018 she signed off on the annual bus inspections, as she had done for the past 5 years. There was a change in personnel at the end of June 2018 and it is not clear as to why that document never made it to the DMV.

Vivian is currently investigating the situation.

Motion: For Vivian to investigate the bus situation on behalf of the BOE and report back with what happened and how it may be prevented in the future

By: Walt Petruniw

Second: John Gentry

All in Favor

Motion passes

Tom Dufort mentioned the correspondence to the Board that was not touched on, all copies were provided to BOE members

F. Consent Agenda

1. Policy Committee Minutes – March 11, 2019
2. Budget Meeting minutes – March 12, 2019
3. Regular Meeting minutes – March 12, 2019
4. Curriculum/Pupil Services minutes – March 26, 2019
5. BOE Budget Meeting – March 27, 2019

Motion: To accept the minutes listed above with corrections as noted

By: Walt Petruniw

Second: Tom Dufort

All in Favor

Motion passes

Motion: To Move (I) Comments from Visitors to (G); moving (G) Executive Session and (H) Possible Action to (H) and (I)

By: Bridgett LaBrecque

Second: John Gentry

All in Favor

Motion passes

G. Comments from Visitors:

Casey brought forward copies of the registrations for everyone to view.

A resident asked about the findings of the bus investigation and how will she find out the outcome.

Another resident asked about feedback from the investigation, she also asked that all aspects of the transportation, including all certifications and trainings involved. Mentioned the temporary bus coordinator that was in place and how a person in that position needs guidance. She also stressed how it affected the town, especially working parents who had difficulty getting their kids to school that day or missed work due to the buses being grounded.

A resident asked about the cost for the extra buses and any fees that may have been involved with this registration issue.

Superintendent stated that STA provided the five buses at no extra charge; there were no fines and they only fee would be for overtime for an investigator.

A resident asked why the children were allowed to get on the unregistered buses after the notification was made about the lapse in registration.

Superintendent Knapton responded that the buses were not unsafe for the children to ride on and once she knew she needed to ground the buses, she grounded them immediately.

Brittany Mellow asked for an invitation to Executive Session to show the board the information she has regarding her sons injuries and was told to set up a formal meeting with the Superintendent. Brittany continuously asked Ms Carey and Ms Knapton for the camera footage to view her sons incident and was told it was not available to her. After first speaking with Dottie, Superintendent Knapton called her back and told her that the camera footage was on an 11 day loop and was not available anymore. Had she been told this in the beginning, the footage could have cleared up this whole issue, by either showing the CES staff to be in the right or in the wrong. She feels the safety of her child was not the number one priority and needs to speak her peace in Executive Session.

A student mentioned that she did not feel safe on the buses even after the inspections, due to the creaking and fire alarm going off every 5 minutes, one of the seats is falling apart and has sharp edges.

Casey the bus coordinator asked to be invited to Executive Session as well. She was informed to speak with Superintendent Knapton.

Motion: To enter Executive Session at 9:39 pm

By: Walt Petruniw

Second: John Gentry

All in Favor

Motion passes

H. Executive Session – Personnel Issue

Board exited from Executive Session at 10:05 pm.

I. Possible Action resulting from Executive Session:

The Board exited from Executive Session at 10:12 pm.

No Action was taken

J. Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn at 10:15 p.m. By: Walt Petruniw 2nd: John Gentry

Respectfully submitted by: Nancy Duvall, Secretary