

# **Board of Education**

## **Ellington, Connecticut**

September, 23, 2020

A regular meeting of the Ellington Board of Education was held on Wednesday, September 23, 2020 at the Library Media Center at Ellington High School, 37 Maple Street, Ellington, CT.

Present were: Mr. Blanchette, Purcaro and Young; Ms. Dzen, Picard-Wambolt, Socha, Nord, Kupferschmid, Underwood and Mullin; Dr. Scott Nicol, Superintendent of Schools.

Administration present were: Mr. John Collins, Director of Technology; Mr. Brian Hendrickson, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Mr. Brian Greenleaf, Director of Finance and Operations; and Dr. Kristy LaPorte, Director of Special Services.

Also in attendance: Ms. Jennifer Brown, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent/Human Resources Coordinator; Ayushman Choudury, Appointed Board of Education Student Representative.

The meeting was called to order at 5:02 p.m. by Mr. Purcaro, Chairperson.

Mr. Purcaro requested a moment of silence.

### **BOARD CHAIR REPORT**

Our school district's pandemic response plan has been carefully and thoughtfully designed through an extensive collaborative process involving members of our community, staff, subject matter experts and local and state officials. Our plan is rooted in science and health data and is purposefully flexible to address the evolving challenges of this pandemic. But what's not flexible are our goals. Our goals have never changed throughout this crisis. The health, safety and well-being of our students, staff and visitors is and always shall be our top priority and goal.

Mr. Purcaro believes that our plan continues to firmly address our health and safety goals and is operating well-within the current public health guidelines and gubernatorial executive orders. We have talked a lot about this in multiple in-person workshops, conference calls, Zoom and Google meetings, etc. So tonight he would like to focus his

Chairman's remarks on the words "well-being". For our students, this means providing a high-quality education. But, as stated repeatedly throughout this planning process, it also means so much more than that. Our schools are at the heart of our community and provide critical social-emotional support and development opportunities for our students. For our elementary students, these opportunities can not simply be "made-up" and if lost at a young age can have devastating life-long impacts on our children. This has been scientifically proven. For other students, they rely on our schools for nutritional support and for other students, for example, where English may be a second language they are disproportionately affected by a widening achievement gap that has been exacerbated by the pandemic.

The "well-being" goal also applies to our treasured staff. For many staff that we have heard from, this means more manageable classroom sizes (both in-person and virtual on-line classrooms), enhanced professional development, more technological support for distance learning, responding to recommendations about PPE, and more. We hear you, we value your feedback, and we are actively addressing your concerns with the Superintendent and the Administration. Tonight and in the spirit of collaboration, we welcome Mark Mahler, President of the local Teacher's Union to share specific data with us that we can take appropriate action on.

We have also heard from many, many parents and families in our community. Most have applauded our work to safely bring our students back to school while we continue to offer distance-learning alternatives to anyone interested. A few comments have been critical of our efforts to safely bring students back to school and that is ok too. The point is, we need to hear from all interested parties and stakeholders so that we, as a Board, can do our elected jobs and make the most informed decisions possible. He would like to thank the following individuals for taking the time to share their feedback and suggestions with the Board:

Cathryn Couzens, Darla Reutter, Emily Niger, Loretta Eckhardt, Emil Johnson, Jenna Miller, Carrie and Eric Schmidt, Erin and Anthony Orvis, Eric Tevelde, Jon Moser, Jim York, Karla and Bill Schultz, Rachel Martinez, Rhonda Garrow and Kate Virkler.

And many others who have called, texted, emailed, stopped-us in the grocery store and elsewhere in Town.

Lastly, as a Board, we have clear expectations of our Superintendent and the Administration. With our continued support, we expect additional capacity building in both our staff resources and teaching spaces as we effectively implement the next phases of our plan. This includes maximizes existing staff resources as well as the hiring of more staff on a temporary, permanent part-time or full-time basis to meet evolving operational needs as we bring more of our students back to school. This also means looking at all available spaces in and outside of our school buildings to adequately spread-out our students.

These are certainly unprecedented times and this Board will continue to work tirelessly with the Superintendent, administration, and staff to do what is best for our students and families.

Ms. Dzen added that they are hearing, listening and engaging all of our stakeholders from health officials to students and everyone in between. It is important for us to remember that we are under the threshold for cases. We took extra precautions in opening with the Hybrid model and will continue along that methodical approach making the needed adjustments as we go. Dr. Nicol and I spoke recently of missing normalcy. I believe that constantly adjusting and pivoting is currently our only norm. We have all had to change because of this pandemic which has not been easy but necessary and we need to keep moving forward.

### SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS

#### EDUInnovate Spring 2020 Grant Recipients

Dr. Nicol recognized that staff with positivity and creativity, and teachers going out of their way to write a grant proposal to show how they want to be creative and innovative, shows great commitment. Dr. Nicol continued by stating that there is an outstanding foundation for the third round of grant programming recipients. Dr. Nicol mentioned the presence of Mr. John Moser, Mrs. Sarah Whelon and student Mitchell Whelon, the representative of EDUInnovate grant to honor the spring, summer 2020 recipients.

Dr. Nicol introduced Mr. John Moser who would be discussing the recipients of the EDUinnovate Spring 2020 Grant.

Mr. Moser discussed the donated \$10,000 to six different teachers throughout the school, to provide innovative tools and technology to teachers and staff.

Mrs. Sarah Whelon begins to recognize recipients that are not present at the meeting, followed by those in attendance.

Ms. Deb Hurlburt - Augmented Reality for Kindergarten Literacy project to enhance the early literacy educational experience for all learners at Windermere School.

Ms. Maria Dowd - Coding Club K-6 project to provide a for students to learn and develop coding skills at Windermere School.

Mr. John Chaves - Computer Design and Creative Software project to increase student exposure to computer aided design and computer aided illustration software at Ellington High School.

Ms. Ines Knospe - Digital Health Smart Curriculum Grades 3-5 project to enhance the health and wellness curriculum at three Ellington elementary schools.

Mr. William Prenetta - Projection Technology for Storytelling project to integrate modern technology into theatrical projects at Ellington High School.

Ms. Karen Nigro - STEM Learning Without Interruption project to provide STEM coding kits to all 7<sup>th</sup> graders at Ellington Middle School.

Mr. Moser returns to the floor to thank all of the recipients and encourages other staff members to fill an application for the next EDUInnovate fundraiser and encourages families if interested in becoming involved to reach out.

### CITIZENS AND STAFF FORUM

Mr. Mark Maller, president of local teacher union and teacher from Ellington High School discusses the difficulty with trying to get the school day to get a sense of normalcy in school. Acknowledges that Dr. Nicol's staff and administration are working as hard as all teachers are. Communicating to teachers the possible trade-offs that may be necessary would be helpful, requests investigating psychological first aid for staff that could give leaders the communication skills for vulnerable staff. The emotional toll on staff is present on a daily basis. Technology interruptions also affect a teacher's school day, thanks Mr. Collins and his staff for all that he has done, however with those issues have led teachers to purchase supplemental computer equipment. Explaining the effect of teachers and staff having to supplement with the teachers resources, as well as what the lack of technical resources students may have. Thanked the board for the consideration when deciding the reopening of Ellington Public Schools.

Mr. John Moser introduces himself as a member of the Back to School Advisory Committee, and is also a parent. Mr. Moser thanked the Board of Education, administration and teachers for getting the hybrid model developed. Having the options to participate in full day, or staying home. In speaking with families, both parents and students would like to be back in school full day. Families having to work is becoming challenging with not having students in full day. Mr. Moser recommends that students in grades 6 and under should be considered for full day, where they will help families and teachers. He thanks all teachers, staff, parents, and board members.

Mrs. Erin Lafleche presents to the board her concerns as a parent and teacher at Windermere. Distance learning education has been taking twice the time as in person. Thanks Jenna McDerment and John Collins. Acknowledges that the students are

resilient and how excited they are to be in school. Mrs. LaFleche is in full support of returning to a five day model, perhaps a four day model allowing teachers to plan, collaborating with fellow staff and administration. Mrs. Lafleche also supports those families who decided to exclusively distance learning, recognizing the challenges that that presents. In conclusion, Mrs. LaFleche supports the teachers and the decision to reopen for a full five day for students.

## CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Purcaro asked if anyone wished to remove any item from the Consent Agenda. Consent Agenda items one through eighteen were adopted.

1. Approval of the minutes from the August 26, 2020 Regular Meeting.
2. Acceptance of the resignation of Karen Blain, Special Education Aide, Ellington High School, effective August 30, 2020.
3. Acceptance of the resignation of Diane Owens, part-time Special Education Aide, Windermere School, effective August 30, 2020.
4. Approval of the employment of Tyler Booth, Teacher, Center School, effective August 31, 2020.
5. Approval of the employment of Daphne Botteron, Teacher Center School, effective August 31, 2020.
6. Approval of the employment of Tavaris Dion-Edwards, Special Education Aide, Windermere School, effective August 31, 2020.
7. Acceptance of the resignation of James Edinger, Special Education Aide, Ellington High School, effective August 31, 2020.
8. Acceptance of the resignation of Angela Flori, Special Education Aide, Center School, effective August 31, 2020.
9. Approval of the employment of Maria Goodman, Math Specialist, Ellington Middle School, effective August 31, 2020.

10. Approval of the employment of Kirsten LaBranche, Permanent Substitute Teacher, Ellington Middle School, effective August 31, 2020.

11. Approval of the employment of Courtney Lavoie, Permanent Substitute Teacher, Center School, effective August 31, 2020.

12. Approval of the employment of James Manger, Permanent Substitute Teacher, Ellington High School, effective August 31, 2020.

13. Approval of the employment of Gomathi Ramachandran, Science Teacher, Ellington High School, effective August 31, 2020.

14. Acceptance of the resignation of Diann Riley, part-time Special Education Aide, Ellington Middle School, effective September 1, 2020.

15. Approval of the employment of Hannah Yoo, part-time Executive Assistant, Food Services, effective September 2, 2020.

16. Approval of the employment of Corrine LaChapelle, Special Education Aide, Ellington Middle School, effective September 3, 2020.

17. Acceptance of the resignation Christine Powers, Food Service Worker, Ellington Middle School, effective September 3, 2020.

18. Acceptance of the resignation of Karen Henry, part-time Special Education Aide, Center School, effective September 7, 2020

A motion was made to adopt the consent agenda as presented.

1st. L. Nord

2nd. M. Kupferschmid

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

## REPORT AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

### Special Reports

### Continued Discussion on Reopening 2020 (Full Five Day In-Person)

Dr. Nicol acknowledged the technical difficulties during the meeting and notes will be documented.

Dr. Nicol discussed the positive approach towards discussion about staff. He thanked Mr. Mahler for representing the teachers as the local teacher's union president. He acknowledges that all staff are important and matter, and that the administrative team are just as human and important as the teachers, and experience the same feelings that the teacher may have. Dr. Nicol thanked those staff members who have worked more hours just to get the job finished. Dr. Nicol discussed the possibility to reopen Ellington Public Schools to a five day model October 5, 2020 with kindergarten and first grade returning October 1, 2020. That this was a transitional time where the EPS opened in an hybrid model and now the consideration was relayed to the public, to reopen the full five days. Acknowledged that all staff, administrative team and teachers have more hours in prep time, trying to be creative like teaching a new course.

COVID has been affecting parents and discussed the effect of having students home, and its effects psychologically. Dr. Nicol expresses that if we don't reopen at this time, then when, as this is the most appropriate time. The decision is difficult and things are going to happen either way the decision is made. Compliments the Ellington community and offers a recommendation to go back to school the full five day, with the possibility of modifying the decision. Dr. Nicol requests the support of the board to begin the conversation about reopening a full five day. Dr. Nicol states that he would not act on his recommendation without the Board of Education support. Dr. Nicol requests the support of the Board to start the conversation, acknowledging what Mr. Mark Mahler presented, it's importance and would like the conversation to continue. Dr. Nicol welcomes any questions from the Board regarding the recommendation, to support the Board in the decision making process either tonight or next Board meeting.

Mr. Purcaro thanked Dr. Nicol for his comments and acknowledged that the Board's commitment to the re-opening plan, the feedback and information that is being processed is important. Mr. Purcaro requested some actionable recommendations that can support the administration, Dr. Nicol, and the staff. Asked if there are specific recommendations that the Board should consider and the board is interested and prepared to have some in depth conversations to discuss to proceed the data to be presented.

Dr. Nicol explains the discussion of PPE, desk shields, interventionists, staffing and the dynamics of staff and staff changes that have occurred. Recognizes that staff have been asked to take positions that they haven't done in many years.

The request of Mr. Mahler by Mr. Purcaro to take the floor to discuss action and recommendations to maintain a sustainable approach toward administration, staff and families.

Dr. Young thanked Mr. Mahler for sending an email survey to all the teachers and to present its findings to the board. Stating the possible problems and also providing solutions is appreciated. First question was regarding distance learning sizes in the early grades. However having the elementary students return earlier, especially the 39 students in one distance learning classes. The concern was how many students who are currently solely distanced learning return and what the class would look like. Dr. Nicol discussed the hot spots specifically the distance learning kindergarten class in which families would like to remain distance learning or return to full day. Discussing the constant shift over the next two months where families may change which model their student will participate in.

Mr. Purcaro wanted to confirm that the solution currently for distance learning for kindergarten is temporary and not a sustainable approach.

Dr. Nicol discussed the class numbers and the adjustments being made including the teacher to student ratio and keeping that ratio low. Dr. Nicol also discussed the challenge of hiring new teachers. In distancing learning, trying some creative distance learning techniques where a sub teacher could work from home. A substitute approach for distance learning.

Mr. Hendrickson discussed an email sent to Silver families that 20 families are considering returning to a full day.

Dr. Young requested an update on masks and desk shields for staff. Mr. Greenleaf responded that masks and desk shields are available for all staff. Dr. Young also inquired about cleaning procedures and an update. Mr. Greenleaf acknowledged that there were some staffing issues and they are being addressed and that the custodial staff are working very closely with administration and there is accountability for all head custodians and their staff. Mr. Greenleaf shared a school's cleaning log with the Board as an example of accountability that is in place.

Dr. Young questioned first Mr. Henderickson if technology staff is now able help those who are distance learning as well as those students in the classroom and then about more technology support, referencing Dan Spada having supported kindergarten

previously in the classroom. Mr. Collins acknowledged that the use of technology compared to last year is much greater. Technology is not perfect and IT is taking the approach to be prepared and make adjustments as needed. The volume that is going successfully is high but there is room for improvement and it is being evaluated on a daily basis.

Dr. Nicol acknowledged that teachers may not feel successful with the distance learning component at times when the technology is not functioning properly. Acknowledges the difficulty and challenges of technology.

Mr. Purcaro questioned Mr. Greenleaf for the status of desk shields for teachers. Mr. Greenleaf states that desk shields were not purchased in surrounding school districts. That being said, the purchase of the desk shields were in addition to the other mitigation strategies provided. Continuing to look at solutions but unfortunately it does come without a significant cost. Trying to find a solution within the resources to expand the amount of desk shields for teachers. Dr Young asks about face shields for all staff and Mr. Greenleaf confirms that all staff have access to them.

Ms. Mullen discussed Dr. Nicol's previous comments regarding the need of teacher substitutes and current teacher openings. Ms.Mullen has the concern of lack of available substitutes and are there steps in place to hire substitutes (i.e Kelly service) Dr. Nicol's response was that teachers that may be unable to teach in person, may be able to teach from home although not a requirement. Unfortunately, there has not been an available pool of substitute teachers for some time and proposed a steady staffing model and steady staffing approach moving forward. Dr. Nicol acknowledged that the lack of substitutes is concerning because without proper staffing, schools are unable to remain open. Dr. Young stated that in some cases school districts make the decisions to close a school. Ms. Mullen asked Dr. Nicol to confirm that it was communicated to retired teachers that the pay rate had increased to offer incentives for returning to teach. Dr. Nicol stated that it was in process.

Ms. Nord stated based on her understanding that the district has five or more, less teachers at the elementary level than last year. Including an interventionist position, an unassigned teacher position, two teachers not returning, and a math interventionist position. Ms. Nord inquired if any applicants for classroom teachers have been received. Dr. Nicol stated that they are pending, general postings are being made and recruiting is occurring but unable to fill all vacancies at this time. Mr. Hendrickson offered that one of the five opening positions are currently in the interview process. Ms. Nord asked why interventionists are not able to continue their primary role of support to

students, and are instead becoming a classroom teacher, why isn't human resources looking for classroom teachers.

Dr. Nicol responded that they are trying to utilize those staff members that have a knowledgeable skill set and that can offer those skills in positions of need. Mr. Purcaro asks Dr. Nicol to confirm that human resources are maximizing the existing resources because there are challenges bringing in and hiring staff. Mr. Pucaro inquired that any staff changes with interventionists is a temporary solution to take care of the immediate student need, but indeed is not a long term sustainable solution. Dr. Nicol confirmed that inquiry.

Ms. Nord asks Mr. Mahler to reiterate his comments regarding the possibility of shortened school days and perhaps relief on Wednesdays, not that it would be a break for teachers, but rather a catch up day in order to prepare lessons and more time to communicate with students. Mr. Mahler feels that a break on Wednesdays would provide planning time for teachers and deep cleaning of classrooms. The break of Wednesdays has worked in other districts as well. Ms. Nord questioned if Wednesdays would be a half day, early release and would be solely distance learning. Dr. Nicol stated that this can be discussed. Dr. Young stated that easing back to school in the hybrid model has been successful based on the teacher survey presented to the Board.

Ms. Picard-Wambolt requested clarification regarding the logistical concerns of social distancing in the classroom, social distancing on the bus, and how lunch times will be handled. Ms. Picard-Wambolt has communicated with teachers and students that the current plan is not working. Working lunches for teachers are not happening, teachers may not eat at all, and screens are a mess. The concern of students and teachers eating in the classroom remains and the plan needs to be redesigned for eating lunch. Ms. Picard-Wambolt states that a full five day in person model should work for students at the elementary level, however at the middle school level and high school levels, teachers will remain working double duty. Having teachers teach in person students and distance learning students is an unsustainable approach.

Dr. Nicol invited Mr. John Guidry, EHS Principal to comment on Ms. Picard-Wambolt's concern.

Mr. Guidry explained that if a highschool teacher sees students twice a week, he wants the teacher to have as much time as possible. Acknowledged trade-off and working lunches for both teachers and students. He has created a preliminary schedule, to move students from specific blocks and remove 3 minutes from every period, and have two

waves which would provide students twenty four minutes without class where lunch can be eaten. The trade off is less time with the teacher and the lack of space in the building to provide a third of students to be in some type of classroom.

Ms. Picard-Wambolt questioned Mr. Guidry that if students are in a classroom and back to five full in person school days, wouldn't students be as close in the cafeteria or another space. Mr. Guidry responded that to have the full student body, which is just under three hundred students, in the cafeteria with their masks off, is not possible. Ms. Picard- Wambolt reiterates her logistical concern which needs to be worked out before the reopening of a full five day in person and the double duty of teachers. Mr. Guidry explained that he cares for all his teachers and has provided technological tool kits to assist in distance learning. He also has a distance learning committee to develop new ways to improve distance learning for teachers. Mr. Guidry stated that the preliminary schedule of shortening class times by three minutes is a start and he has administrators and teachers helping with the scheduling process.

Dr. Nicol addressed Ms. Picard-Wambolt by acknowledging that in general with the return to all K-12 students, adding the half of school back in the social distancing and cohorting is not as good. However the recommendations of the Department of Public Health and Department of Education states that if certain criteria is met, schools should return to full day. Mr.Guidry suggested that any solutions would need to be incremental with continued room for improvement.

Mr. Mahler mentioned that the concern of lunch was discussed with Mr Guidry yesterday and today a preliminary schedule was available. Acknowledged that Mr. Guidry is aware of the concern and working on it.

Ms. Underwood questioned the speed of Dr. Nicol wanting to get all students back to a full five day model. Based on the information received and the teacher's survey responses, Ms. Underwood feels that a full five day in person should wait to reopen until issues are addressed, not October 1, based on the enormity of the stated concerns. With homeschooled students, the concern is that the numbers have jumped six plus times as many as last year, acknowledging that it is a parental choice however the board should consider how to address it on a future agenda.

Ayushman Choudury, Appointed Board of Education Student Representative addressed the board. Mr. Choudury stated that students have gone through several transitions over the last three weeks and expressed appreciation for all administrators and teachers. Continued to state the feedback received by students at EHS. The concerns

are the inability to socially distance in the classrooms, congested hallways if five day full in person, lunch wave schedule and how it work, requests Mr. Guidry to reiterate his preliminary schedule of two lunch waves. Mr. Guidry stated that if students return to five full day in person, waves would be increased to three with shorter class periods, confirmed dedicated lunch times location to be determined. Mr. Choudry felt that the desk shields during lunch are not as effective in stopping the spread and in keeping students safe. If all students return, and masks are removed to eat lunch, there is much concern that it will not keep students safe. Mr. Guidry responds by stating the with desk shields and the minimum of three feet apart, acknowledging that six feet is ideal, while eating is utilizing some of the mitigation strategies provided. Mr. Choudry questioned when cleaning would occur in the full five day model versus the four day model with deep cleaning on Wednesdays. Mr. Greenleaf responded by stating each school gets a very comprehensive clean every single day on a nightly basis. Bathroom areas, handrails are getting cleaned twice daily and they are following all cleaning procedures and protocol. The final concern was the data within Tolland County has steadily increased over a period of weeks. Knowing that the threshold of number of cases per 100,000 people is ten, with the trend of increasing which has subject to change, and the time when schools are recommended to reopen on October 5, how would that be addressed?

Dr. Nicol confirmed that the administration has been looking at those trends. And will continue to look at those trends. If trends should increase dramatically over a two-six week period, administration will make preparations for communication with students and families if changes to the school model need to occur. Weekly communication would occur to provide the public and staff of the district's current situation. Mr. Choudry raises the concern if different schools are on different models within the district, what would that do for some families where child care is a concern. Offers the suggestion that the high school remains on a hybrid model and elementary returns full five day in person.

Ms. Mullen addressed the board that with all of the changes we as a community will learn to adapt. She suggested to the Board that they allow the administration to do their job and have faith that the right thing will be done. Ms. Mullen explained that in communication with families the question of why the high school was not closed based on positive Covid cases. Explained that it can be difficult to make these decisions for the community. Also raised concern about teachers and interventionists and what an important role interventionists make for students. Ms. Mullen also recommended that, if needed for a PD day, that psychological first aid not only be provided for all teachers and staff but for every student. Supports the Wednesday break.

Ms. Dzen addressed the board with the inquiry of desk shields for teachers and is something that needs to be looked into. Also suggesting noticeable signs on the outside of bathrooms and classrooms to indicate to teachers when those spaces are clean. Mr. Greenleaf acknowledged that is something that is being discussed and is a great suggestion. Another topic of concern is the inclusiveness of the Silver cohort students within the classroom and teachers need more planning time.

Mr. Purcaro addressed Dr. Nicol to provide a time frame to address the actionable items in order to move forward in the planning process.

Ms. Nord brought up health and safety and suggests recovering to address all the actionable items.

Ms. Underwood suggests flexibility in the schedule presented last week and recommends pushing the plan forward a week or so.

Dr. Nicol stated that by bringing K-2 students back on October 1, 2020 was helping in the transition to five full day in person. Also states that the Board voted unanimously on August 14, 2020 to return full five day in person on October 5, 2020. In addition, added reentry date of October 13, 2020 for those silver families that would like to return to the classroom.

Ms. Kupferschmid commented that if reopening is delayed what difference it may or may not make. Reiterates to have faith in the administration.

Ms. Picard-Wambolt stated that at the August 14, 2020 meeting concerns that were told would be addressed, have not. Teacher desk shields, avoiding lunch in the classrooms and the double duty of the teacher have not been addressed.

Dr. Nicol responded by explaining that desk shields were not a requirement but were purchased as an additional mitigation strategy. Currently, students are able to eat lunch outside of the classroom as well. Communication with the community is strong and will continue. Recommended to continue with the momentum and the consistency of communication and communicate when adjustments are needed.

Mr. Purcaro states that he wants to continue with the current course, but needs to take action on some of the actionable items to continue to make this easier for teachers and staff to understand what is happening. However based on the timeline of received information, may want to consider an additional meeting to process the actionable items

in more detail if needed. He recommended any Board members with questions and concerns email Dr. Nicol for his review.

### Fall 2020 Ellington High School Athletics - Mr. McCluskey

Mr. McCluskey updated the board regarding fall athletics. Currently there are 243 athletes that are participating in athletic teams this fall in cooperation with coaching staff, administration and athletic department measures have been put in place since the beginning of the fall season with Covid protocols and procedures are followed everyday with alignment with the CIAC guidelines. As of Monday, September 21, 2020 based on CIAC guidelines, practices have been moved from 90 minutes to 2 hours with the possibilities of scrimmages. On October 1, 2020 fall teams will start a regionalized game play, CIAC has divided the state into regions, and with NCCC the state is split in half with six other schools. Communication from CIAC on September 16, 2020 regarding 11v11 contact football was cancelled for the 2020 season, however under CIAC guidelines, football is allowed to practice in conditioning and individual skill development with no contact. Also working with coaching staff and members of the team for other opportunities that may be available within the CIAC guidelines. Additional sports such as cross country, swimming, soccer, and volleyball are on track to practice 2 hours next week as well. Provided opportunities for cheer and dance teams within CIAC guidelines to continue to condition and prepare for their competition season which occurs in the winter.

Dr. Nicol acknowledged the athletes that were unable to participate in the spring and now in the fall that the board and administration are aware and appreciate what the coaches are doing creatively. Dr. Nicol discussed the possibility of the football teams and booster teams having access to lease foot equipment to do private activities in a private league. Currently a work in progress and would need to be brought up to the Board in executive session.

Dr. Young asked Mr. McCluskey if schools return to fully distance learning what would be the response for the current sport season. Mr. McCluskey responded by saying if Ellington High School were to close and both academics and athletics were required to shut down, guidelines would be followed by the Governor's statewide decision.

### Regular Board Committee Reports

#### Communications

Committee Chair Mullen provided an update from a meeting on September 15, 2020 which discussed the behind the scenes at the Board of Education. Next communication video will be with EPS school nurses as well as custodians.

#### Operations

None

#### Curriculum

Committee Chair Young reported three items. The upcoming election and how we are preparing for what may be a heated and emotional issue. Updated on distance learning items that need to be addressed with best practice for the distance learning option. Mr. Collins was asked if Infinite Campus was running towards the roll out. Mr. Collins stated that they are completing phase one which was the launch and now phase starting to implement phase two.

#### Finance

None

#### Policy

Committee Chair Picard-Wambolt reported the committee met on September 15, 2020 to discuss administrative regulation for policies. Referenced Dr. Nicol's presentation to the committee with newly developed administrative regulations that go with revised policies. No vote is necessary by the Board at this time. Second on agenda was random drug testing of students that participate in extracurricular activities. No action needed at this time

### ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

#### Superintendent's Report

Dr. Nicol reported that to empower teachers to do their jobs well and be able to teach controversial issues, he has worked with and received information from staff to be translated into a video to be shared with the community.

#### Directors' Reports

#### Distance Learning Update - Mr. Hendrickson and Mr. Collins

Mr. Hendrickson and Mr. Collins provided an update on distance learning.

Monthly Financial Report - Mr. Greenleaf

Mr. Greenleaf provided an update on the monthly financial report.

BOARD LIAISON REPORT

Finance

Committee Chair Nord reports the 2019 audit is complete and the 2020 town audit will be completed on time.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

NONE

ACTION ITEMS

1. Move that the Board of Education accept, with regret and best wishes, the retirement request of Sarah Harrington, Special Education Aide at Ellington High School, effective August 31, 2020.

1st. K. Picard-Wambolt

2nd. M. Young

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

A motion was made to move to enter into Executive Session to discuss personnel matter(s) and invite the following people to attend: Dr. Nicol, Superintendent of Schools; Johanna Zelman, Legal Counsel; John Collins, Director of Technology and Information; and Jennifer Brown, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent/HR Coordinator.

1st. M. Underwood

2nd. M. Kupferschmid

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

The Board entered into Executive Session at 8:18 p.m.

The Board exited Executive Session at: 8:42 p.m.

Move to approve the settlement negotiated in the matter of Riggs vs. Ellington Board of Education in the amount of \$8,500.00 to be paid by the Connecticut Interlocal Risk Management Agency.

1st M. Kupferschmid

2nd. J. Dzen

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

CORRESPONDENCE/ROUNDTABLE

None

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 8:43 pm

1st. K. Picard-Wambolt

2nd. J. Mullin

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Kris Picard-Wambolt  
Secretary