

Board of Education

Ellington, Connecticut

July 22, 2020

A virtual regular meeting of the Ellington Board of Education was held on Wednesday, July 22, 2020.

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

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.

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

BOARD CHAIR REPORT

Mr. Purcaro opened his report by reiterating that the planning for reopening is committed to doing what is best for our students, staff and families. We have a plan that is flexible and adaptable and discussing in further detail tonight. Things will change over the few weeks and by design we will be able to ramp up and make changes accordingly. Thank you to the administration and members of the reopening committee for their hard work.

SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS

Ayushman Choudhury - 2020-2021 State Student Advisory Council of Education Appointment

Mr. Guidry proudly congratulates Aysuhman on being recognized and chosen to be a part of the State Student Advisory Council of Education. This committee meets with state officials, the Governor and many executives to provide a high school perspective

on issues and plays many advisory roles as well. Ayushman continues to exhibit model student behavior both inside and outside of school and we are very proud.

CITIZENS AND STAFF FORUM

No one addressed the Board.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

1. Approval of the minutes from the June 17, 2020 Regular Meeting.
2. Approval of the minutes from the June 23, 2020 Special Meeting.
3. Approval of the minutes from the July 1, 2020 Special Meeting.
4. Approval of the minutes from the July 13, 2020 Special Meeting.
5. Approval of the minutes from the July 16, 2020 Special Meeting.
6. Approval of the minutes from the July 17, 2020 Special Meeting.
7. Acceptance of the resignation of Taylor Parker as Lead Teacher/Math Specialist effective June 23, 2020.
8. Approval of the employment of Nikki DeMichael as a Grade 2 Teacher at Center School, effective August 31, 2020.
9. Approval of the employment of Chris Messier as a Grade 6 Teacher at Center School, effective August 31, 2020.
10. Approval of the employment of Meghan Phelon as a Kindergarten Teacher at Windermere School, effective August 31, 2020.
11. Approval of the employment of Jillian Harrison as a Grade 1 Teacher at Windermere School, effective August 31, 2020.
12. Approval of the employment of Courtney Sissick as a Grade 3 Teacher at Windermere School, effective August 31, 2020.

13. Approval of the employment of Rachel Carterud as Grade 5 Teacher at Windermere School, effective August 31, 2020.

A motion was made to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

1. J. Dzen

2. L. Nord

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

REPORT AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

Special Reports

Ellington Public Schools' Reopening Plan 2020

Dr. Nicol stated that the formal presentation on reopening was given on Monday night and the feedback on the plan was very helpful and appreciated.

Opportunities for staff feedback will be taking place during virtual cabinet office hours for each school. Staff will have the opportunity to have a voice and ask questions.

Board Members mentioned a few points to keep in consideration as the district moves forward with reopening. It is important to keep in mind that staff are afraid, they are afraid for themselves and their families, however the plan seems to mitigate risk as much as possible.

It is important to remember that the plan is fluid, if health data changes, then the plan changes to match the data.

Regular Committee Reports

Communications

Ms. Dzen reported that the committee met yesterday and discussion was focused on how to communicate the reopening strategy. A joint meeting of the Communications Committee and the Reopening Advisory Committee would be beneficial, it will be a public meeting.

Policy

Committee Chair Picard-Wambolt reported that the committee met on July 8th and continued discussion on Draft Policy 9328 - Attendance via Electronic Equipment/Live Streaming Meetings, Revised Policy 5145.5 - Civil and Legal Rights and Responsibilities, Sexual Discrimination and Sexual Harassment, Revised Policy 4118.11 - Nondiscrimination, and Revised Policy 4118.112.

Curriculum

Mr. Hendrickson reported that the Curriculum Committee will be meeting tomorrow, there is no update at this time.

Finance

Committee Chair Nord reported that the committee met on July 14th and discussed the possibility of establishing a medical reserve account with the town as well as reviewing costs associated with COVID-19.

Operations

No meeting was held.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Superintendent's Reports

Directors' Reports

Social and Emotional Learning Specialist

Dr. Kristy LaPorte provided an update on hiring for her team. There is a posting for a Social and Emotional Learning Specialist for the elementary levels, this will allow for counselors, social workers and school psychologists to all apply for the new position.

Human Resources Temporary Consultant

Mr. Greenleaf stated the administration recognizes that the current model of Human Resources (HR) is under-resourced for a district of Ellington's size. The current COVID-19 pandemic has already increased this burden with additional laws (e.g. Families First Coronavirus Response Act) and their provisions (e.g. Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act & Emergency Families Medical Leave Expansion Act) to navigate, and the plan to return all staff to school will only add more to the human resources plate.

Over the next 2-3 months, the Ellington Public Schools expects a significant number of requests for accommodation from staff who may be at high risk of severe illness with COVID-19. Each request must be handled individually. This falls on top of the busiest time within HR in getting new staff onboarded for the fall.

EPS administration will hire an HR consultant to work through the legal and administrative challenges the district will receive.

2019-2020 School Improvement Plan Results

Mr. Hendrickson referenced the memo that was shared with the Board and commended the administrative team for amazing work.

Monthly Financial Update

Mr. Greenleaf provided an update on the monthly financial report. The current balance on the budget of \$39,576,214 is \$1,360,200.28. This includes both current expenditures and encumbrances. This financial update includes all payroll through June 30, 2020 and additional accounts payable through July 21, 2020.

The business office is working through end of year adjustments which will affect the balance in both directions. As previously discussed, the final budget expenditures are on track to exceed the projected balance of \$909K pledged to be returned to the Town. We currently anticipate an additional \$225K to be returned to the town.

The Ellington Public Schools has had a successful transition to a new software system for finance/payroll/human resources. Included within this transition is a redefinition of all the object codes in order to better align with Federal and State regulations.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

NONE

ACTION ITEMS

1. A motion was made to endorse the Reopening Plan 2020-2021 as presented and further directs the administration to maintain the document in perpetuity as a working document that may be updated consistent with updated information, guidance, and requirements from public health experts and agencies and federal and state departments of education.

1st.

2nd.

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

2. A motion was made to approve the position entitled, "Social and Emotional Learning Specialist" as a new position with rights outlined in Ellington Education Association.

1st.

2nd.

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

3. A motion was made to accept, with regret and best wishes, the retirement request of Roy Gurnon, Teacher at Ellington High School, effective June 30, 2020.

1st.

2nd.

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

4. A motion was made to accept, with regret and best wishes, the retirement request of Judy Moeller, School Counselor at Ellington High School, effective July 9, 2020.

1st.

2nd.

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

5. A motion was made that upon recommendation of the Operations Committee, approve the Windermere Playground Project, with thanks to rising EHS senior Madison Vale for her effort to move this project forward.

1st.

2nd.

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

6. A motion was made that Upon recommendation of the Operations Committee, approve Pathway to the Green Zone Pilot Project at Center School.

1st.

2nd.

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

7. A motion was made that upon recommendation of the Finance Committee, approve the administration to work with the town to create an internal leasing program with the Town for the purposes of installing two additional lights on the EHS Athletic Field.

1st.

2nd.

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

8. A motion was made that the Board authorize the Board Chair and administration to enter into an agreement of accreditation with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) as previously presented to the Board by Dr. LaPorte, Director of Special Services.

1st.

2nd.

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

9. A motion was made to Motion to Table Discussion of the Medical Reserve Account to a separate meeting.

1st.

2nd.

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

10. A motion was made that Upon recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Board of Education shall formally accept a sum of \$1,325 for the purposes of reducing lunch service debt for the 2019-2020 fiscal year, with thanks to Jamie and Aaron Foster for organizing the collection of these donations.

1st.

2nd.

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

11. A motion was made that Upon recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Board of Education shall formally accept a sum of \$1,075, with thanks to the individuals listed below, for the purpose of establishing and filling an Emergency Food Pantry that ran concurrently with the Emergency Grab & Go program.

1st.

2nd.

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

12. A motion was made that Move that upon the recommendation of the Policy Committee, the Board of Education hold a first vote to adopt the Ellington Public Schools Proposed Policy 9328 - Attendance via Electronic Equipment/Live Streaming Meetings, as presented.

1st.

2nd.

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

13. A motion was made that upon the recommendation of the Policy Committee, the Board of Education hold a first vote to adopt the Ellington Public

Schools Revised Policy 5145.5 - Civil and Legal Rights and Responsibilities, Sexual Discrimination and Sexual Harrassment, as presented.

1st.

2nd.

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

14. A motion was made that upon the recommendation of the Policy Committee, the Board of Education hold a first vote to adopt the Ellington Public Schools Revised Policy 4118.11 - Nondiscrimination, as presented.

1st.

2nd.

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

15. A motion was made that upon the recommendation of the Policy Committee, the Board of Education hold a first vote to adopt the Ellington Public Schools Revised Policy 4118.112 - Sexual Discrimination/Harrassment, as presented.

1st.

2nd.

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

A motion was made to move into Executive Session to discuss the Superintendent's evaluation.

1st. J. Dzen

2nd. L. Nord

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

The Board entered into Executive Session at p.m.

The Board exited out of Executive Session at p.m.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 9:12 p.m.

1st. M. Underwood

2nd. K. Picard-Wambolt

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Kris Picard-Wambolt

Secretary