

A Regular Meeting of the Ellington Board of Education was held on Wednesday, May 24, 2023, in the Ellington High School Library Media Center, 37 Maple Street, Ellington, CT 06029.

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. by Chair Jennifer Dzen.

PRESENT Chair Jennifer Dzen, Vice-Chair Mike Young (virtual), Treasurer Liz Nord, Marcia Kupferschmid, Angela Moser, Kerry Socha (departed 8:05 p.m.), Miriam Underwood, Steve Viens

ABSENT Secretary Jennifer Mullin, Gary Blanchette

ALSO PRESENT Dr. Scott V. Nicol, Superintendent of Schools
Mr. Oliver Barton, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Dr. Kristy LaPorte, Director of Special Services
Mr. Aaron Fliss, Director of Technology
Ms. Stephanie Veturis, Coordinator of Accounting
Mr. Rik Roy, Board of Education Student Representative

NATIONAL ANTHEM

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Ellington Middle School Vocal Ensemble, directed by Ms. Mary Walsh

Chair Dzen stated that the student liaison report will take place next, moving the agenda item up so that Student Liaison Rik, can depart the meeting early.

Student Liaison Report

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Student Liaison Rik Roy gave his report to the Board.

- Athletics: EHS baseball played at Dunkin Park, and many teams are currently completing in NCCC tournament play. Boys' Soccer and Girls' Gymnastics were recognized at the State Capitol.
- AP testing has been completed and ran smoothly.
- Senior Events: Senior Class day was at Boulder Ridge. Class Night is on May 31st, Senior Walk is on June 8th, Graduation is on June 9th and SafeGrad will take place after graduation.

Mike Young added a motion for the Approval of Phase 1 Early Procurement Package

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MOTION

First: M. Young

Second: M. Underwood

Move that the Board of Education approve Phase 1 Early Procurement Package. We hereby certify that these final plans and project manual(s) as prepared for bidding and dated May 22, 2023, and the professional cost estimate, completed in accordance with Level 3 of ASTM International Standard E1557, Standard Classification of Building Elements and Related Sitework-UNIFORMAT II for this project, dated May 23, 2023, have been reviewed and approved for this project on the dates shown above. We further authorize the submittal of these plans, project manuals, and cost estimates to be submitted to the Office of School Construction Grants & Review for review.

Motion unanimously carried.

SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS

CAS (CT Association of Schools) Scholar Leader Awards - Ellington Middle School

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Ms. Michele Murray, Co-Principal, Ellington Middle School

Co-Principal Murray introduced Hank Ellis and Grace Foster to the Board as the 22-23 CAS Scholar Leader Award recipients. Award recipients should display the following attributes: strong excellence in the

classroom, demonstrate leadership in the classroom, and community involvement. Grace and Hank will be recognized at the State banquet and represent Ellington. Congratulations Grace and Hank!

“Good Knight” Leadership Awards - Ellington High School

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Mr. John Guidry, Principal, Ellington High School

Mr. Guidry introduced the all-new “Good Knight” award recipients, Natalie Marshall and William Naraghi. Formerly the leadership award, and in line with identity work at Ellington High School an all-new re-branded award has been created - the “Good Knight” Award. This award is to be awarded to two seniors, one boy, and one girl. Required characteristics to be a "Good Knight" include being connected to the Ellington community in multiple ways, sterling character, clear history of advocacy and work to benefit others, and strong academics. The process included school counselors and faculty selecting the recipients. Congratulations Natalie and William!

BOARD CHAIR REPORT

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Chair Dzen thanked the residents of Ellington for their participation in the recent referendum vote that included the passing of the Town budget and the additional funds for the Windermere Building Project.

CITIZEN & STAFF FORUM - None

CONSENT AGENDA

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1. Approval of Minutes: Special Meeting, April 26, 2023, 5:15 p.m.
2. Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting, April 26, 2023, 6:00 p.m.
3. Human Resources Monthly Report

Ms. Dzen asked if anyone wished to remove any item(s) from the Consent Agenda. Ms. Dzen announced that with hearing none, the Consent Agenda is accepted as written.

REPORT AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

SPECIAL REPORTS

Climate and Culture: "What it Means to be a Knight?"

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Mr. Brandon Hubrins, Assistant Principal, Ellington High School

Ellington High School has spent the last few years investing in our Culture and Climate work. After much reflection, collaboration, and consultation, a full year of quality initiatives was implemented that allowed full exploration of what it means to be “a Knight”. Mr. Hubrins began by thanking the students and teachers for Climate and Culture work. He listed the names of the faculty and students who were part of the process. Next, Climate and Culture Student Leaders presented the “Why” which is, “We Desire to have Better Communication, Trusting Connections, and Belong to a Meaningful and Positive Community”. It was shared that teachers participated in professional development to appropriately lead students in safe activities that encouraged personal storytelling and getting to know one another in meaningful ways. Using the Seeds of Civility, our advisory groups provided unique opportunities for students to speak their truth while also debating the issues rather than the person to develop and define "What it Means to be a Knight?". The use of RULER, which is an Emotional Intelligence Program that focuses on recognizing, understanding labeling, expressing, and regulating emotions has also been implemented in this work. One of the outcomes of is that Ellington High School began to incorporate one Heritage Day per quarter into our advisories. These lessons gave more time for students to engage in hearing stories specifically from a different culture. The lessons were high quality and engaging. Staff worked to create culturally sensitive lesson plans that aligned with cross-curriculum standards. “Suit Up, Stand Up” became the phrase that best met the message to be conveyed. Students shared that, “When we Suit Up, we are preparing ourselves with the necessary strategies for the challenges to come. When we Stand Up, we are using our acquired strategies to face those

challenges.” Going forward as students matriculate through the years, the journey to Knighthood will be symbolized through a badge. Each badge will incorporate a different element of the vision of the graduate and require students to complete their journey in order to gain full Knighthood. Freshman focus on introduction and integration, Sophomores on service and community contribution, Juniors on pursuing personal interests and goals, and Seniors (Full Knighthood) on problem-solving and innovation.

District Improvement Plan Update

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Mr. Oliver Barton, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction

Mr. Barton shared that the update included three parts and the presentation will be broken up into two parts. Emotional intelligence, high-quality teaching and learning, and efficient operations were highlighted. First was the Culture and Climate update from the high school. Next, Michelle Murray and Jennifer Hill gave an update on the Emotional Intelligence (EI) initiative across the district and spoke about the design and progress in a broad sense. Ms. Megan Falin spoke to elementary implementation and Mr. Ben Giorgi shared ways in which the high school is implementing EI. Mr. Barton noted that across all schools it should be clear that academic teaching is not slowing down but is maintaining a swift and rigorous pace while weaving the Emotional Intelligence pieces in.

Next, Mr. Barton introduced Nicole Bolduc to the Board, she is a nominee for the Presidential Award (top three in CT) and a national trainer for Open SciED. In looking at the NGSS data at the middle school, Nicole took on a project noticing deficits in the data for content standards and worked on alignment. In collaboration, she and the team successfully aligned grades 6-8 to the state standards.

Mr. Barton closed by sharing that the presentations from teachers this evening show the passion that is alive in their classrooms and is really important to the district. Chair Dzen shared her appreciation for their work.

REGULAR BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Policy

Liaison Moser shared that the committee met and discussed the policies that are up as action items for this meeting.

Finance

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Treasurer Liz Nord shared that the committee met on May 11, 2023. At that meeting, unaffiliated salaries were discussed in Executive Session, medical and dental insurance rates, and well as, the pre-kindergarten fees and the pay-to-participate rates for athletics.

Curriculum

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Dr. Young shared that the committee met on May 23, 2023, and discussed STEM and Science programming for grades K-6, and digital tools for accessing data. For the STEM discussion, committee members were led in a sample inquiry activity using a density bottle (beads suspended in clear liquid, including salt water and alcohol). The activity showed the committee how epistemic curiosity could be nurtured with simple open observations and questions by students. Next, Mr. Barton introduced Mr. Fliss who described how [Infinite Campus](#) and associated data visualizations are being built out based on teacher and administrator needs. For example, data is being used to provide teachers with student data that could support grade transition (e.g., elementary to middle school, 8th to 9th grade, and transitions within schools). The rollout of data visualizations to teachers and administration has revealed some challenges and additional work will follow on the use of the new tools.

ADMINISTRATION REPORTS

Superintendent's Report

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Dr. Nicol shared that a committee met to discuss the Ellington Unplugged Initiative. Ellington Unplugged will be rolled out similarly to the Seeds of Civility. Ellington Unplugged includes suggestions/concepts for a healthy lifestyle. Dr. Nicol also shared that they are progressing with the Crystal Lake search and the plan is to send two to three finalists to the Board. Concurrently, the Assistant Principal search for Windermere School is underway. There are 140 applicants. The district is looking to announce the new appointments by June 14, 2023.

Directors' Reports

Monthly Financial Report

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Ms. Stephanie Veturis, Coordinator of Accounting

Ms. Veturis reported that there has been very little change since the April meeting. The budget will have well under 10K remaining at the end of the year to return to the Town's general fund. The payroll department has been busy processing the paraeducator retro pay, including regular salaries, extra hours worked, and contract stipends. Ms. Veturis thanked the accounting office team, Kim Porter, Robin Millette, and Julie Warren for their work. The Excess Cost Grant payment is expected this month which will offset the tuition account. The business office will continue to monitor the budget closely as the year-end nears. Funds from additional accounts may be used as needed to offset costs. The district also has an unexpended fund that can be used in case of emergency with Board approval. That fund has \$150,000 in it.

BOARD LIAISON REPORTS

Center School

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Liaison Marcia Kupferschmid shared that the calendars are packed with end-of-year events. The Fun Run was held indoors due to rain but was successful. Kindergarten Orientation and Revolutionary War Day are all coming up. She presented the Best Communities in Music Award at the chorus concert. All of the end-of-year events are found on the [school events calendar](#).

Middle School

Watch [HERE](#)

Board Liaison Socha shared that the dance was held, the vocal and band concerts were held and were excellent and the Best Communities Award was presented. The music team had a trip to Six Flags, the 7th-grade trip to Quassy is on schedule and the 8th-grade is leaving for D.C. on the 30th. The high school drama program is visiting the middle school to present, she thought that was a creative way to introduce the program to the middle school.

Board of Finance

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Liaison Liz Nord shared that the Tax Abatement for Seniors Committee met and referred to Miriam to report as she attended the meeting. A 60-day special committee was created that presented to the Board of Finance options to provide tax relief to those who needed it most. The BOF took this into consideration and will place the discussion on the June meeting agenda to make a decision. The abatement would go into effect in the next budget year, if approved, and will be in effect for two years.

Windermere

Watch [HERE](#)

Liaison Steve Viens attended the concert on May 18th and presented the Best Communities Award. He shared that the attendance and performance were tremendous. He noted that the speaker system was hard to hear. Dr. Nicol indeed that with the new Windermere Building Project, the system will be easier to use. Kindergarten Orientation took place, and on May 25th Windermere will hold the ESL Potluck Supper. Revolutionary War Day is on the 26th and the band concert is on June 1st.

Liz Nord added that the chorus sang at the Yard Goats game and Steve added that they did a tremendous job.

Crystal Lake School

Watch [HERE](#)

Liaison Miriam Underwood will be presenting the Best Communities in Music Award on June 1, 2023.

CREC

Watch [HERE](#)

Liaison Miriam Underwood shared that she and Dr. Nicol attended the annual meeting. Public Act 5003 was discussed. She stated that there were many people in attendance and it was nice to see everyone there.

Ellington High School

Watch [HERE](#)

Liaison Angie Moser reported that the high school Best Communities in Music Award presentation will be on May 25th. Graduation is on June 9th. Miriam Underwood inquired about the car parade. Dr. Nicol shared that the district will share that information with the Board as details are received. Lastly, Angie Moser added that the administration is looking toward their summer projects: revamping spaces and ways to use Infinite Campus data to better serve students and families.

ACTION ITEMS

Watch [HERE](#)

Approval of Pre-Kindergarten Rates

MOTION: First: L. Nord
Second: M. Underwood
To approve the Pre-Kindergarten Rates.
Motion unanimously carried.

Approval of Pay-to-Participate Rates

MOTION First: L. Nord
Second: A. Moser
To approve the Pay-to-Participate Rates.
Motion unanimously carried.

Retirement of Dennis Lemire, Custodian at Center School effective December 29, 2023

MOTION First: M. Young
Second: L. Nord
To accept the retirement of Dennis Lemire, Custodian at Center School effective December 29, 2023.
Motion unanimously carried.

Retirement of Mary Jane Rancourt, Paraprofessional, effective June 30, 2023

MOTION First: M. Underwood
Second: L. Nord
To accept the retirement of Mary Jane Rancourt, Paraprofessional, effective June 30, 2023.
Motion unanimously carried.

Retirement of Colleen Palozej, Paraprofessional, effective June 30, 2023

MOTION First: L. Nord
Second: S. Viens
To accept the retirement of Colleen Palozej, Paraprofessional, effective June 30, 2023.
Motion unanimously carried.

First Read to Adopt Advanced Course or Program/Challenging Curriculum Policy in the 6000 Series

MOTION First: A. Moser
Second: M. Young

To approve first read to adopt Advanced Course or Program/Challenging Curriculum Policy in the 6000 Series.
Motion unanimously carried.

First Read to Adopt Curricular Exemptions Policy in the 6000 Series

MOTION First: A. Moser
Second: M. Underwood
To approve first read to adopt Curricular Exemptions Policy in the 6000 Series.
Motion unanimously carried.

First Read to Repeal Health Assessments and Immunizations Policy in the 5000 Series

MOTION First: A. Moser
Second: M. Young
To approve first read to repeal Health Assessments and Immunizations Policy in the 5000 Series.
Motion unanimously carried.

First Read to Adopt Revisions to the Health Services Policy in the 5000 Series

MOTION First: A. Moser
Second: M. Underwood
To approve first read to adopt revisions to the Health Services Policy in the 5000 series.
Motion unanimously carried.

First Read to Adopt the Revision to Policy 6156 Parent-Teacher Communication

MOTION First: A. Moser
Second: S. Viens
To approve first read to adopt the revision to Policy 6156 Parent-Teacher Communication.
Motion unanimously carried.

OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS/CORRESPONDENCE/ROUNDTABLE

EXECUTIVE SESSION - Unaffiliated Salary Negotiations with possible action item

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EXECUTIVE SESSION (if necessary):

MOTION: First: L. Nord
Second: M. Underwood
Move that the Board of Education move into Executive Session to discuss Unaffiliated Salary Negotiations and invite the following into Executive Session:
Dr. Scott Nicol, Superintendent of School
Marcia Kupferschmid and Mike Young abstained. Angie Moser was not present for the vote. Miriam Underwood, Liz Nord, and Steve Viens were in favor of the motion.

The Board entered into Executive Session at 8:27 p.m.

The Board exited Executive Session at 8:55 p.m.

Watch [HERE](#)

Public session began at 8:56 p.m.

Approval of Unaffiliated Salary Notifications

MOTION: First: L. Nord
Second: M. Young
Move that upon recommendation of the Finance Committee the Board approve salary

notifications for unaffiliated employees with salaries or hourly rates listed within the schedule enclosed as Exhibit A.
Motion unanimously carried.

ADJOURNMENT
MOTION

First: YOUNG
Second: MOSER
To adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Board (8:04 p.m.)
Motion unanimously carried.

Approved

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by Jennifer Dzen, Board Chair

