

A Regular Meeting of the Ellington Board of Education was held on Wednesday, October 25, 2023, in the Ellington High School Library Media Center, 37 Maple Street, Ellington, CT 06029.

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Chair Jennifer Dzen.

PRESENT Chair Jennifer Dzen, Vice-Chair Mike Young, Gary Blanchette, Marcia Kupferschmid, Angela Moser, Miriam Underwood (Virtual), Kerry Socha (6:29 p.m.), Steve Viens

ABSENT Secretary Jennifer Mullin, Treasurer Liz Nord

ALSO PRESENT Dr. Scott V. Nicol, Superintendent of Schools
Mr. Oliver Barton, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Ms. Alisha Carpino, Director of Finance and Operations
Dr. Kristy LaPorte, Director of Special Services
Mr. Aaron Fliss, Director of Technology

NATIONAL ANTHEM

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Star Spangled Banner presented by members of the Ellington High School Treble Choir directed by Mr. Richard Diamond, Director of Vocal Music.

SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS

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Ellington High School Alum, Class of 2020, Specialist Edward Moriarty – Fire Control Specialist, 82nd Airborne Chorus Member and Paratrooper

Dr. Nicol introduced Specialist Edward Moriarty to the audience and welcomed his family, Jason and Pam Moriarty and Tutor Sherri Krausse. Unfortunately, Eddie was unable to join the Board remotely however the board welcomed a statement from Andrea Howarth, School Counselor at Ellington High School. Edward's Father, Jason Moriarty shared a statement as well. Ellington Public Schools thanks the entire group for their service and is honored to host Edward's family as the Special Recognition.

"As seen on AGT the 82nd Airbourne Chorus is comprised of many different backgrounds, they represent nearly twenty thousand servicemen and women who are ready to deploy around the globe in less than 48 hours. They are highly trained and effective, compassionate and understanding, they understand they have a job to do for the collective and as individuals. The Board of Education is similar, policies address the collective but it's the people who address the individuals. Without the help of principals, guidance, teachers, and tutors, students would never know their true potential. Thank you."

-Jason Moriarty

"I want to extend my congratulations to Eddie Moriarty and the 82 Airborne Division Chorus for their accomplishments on America's Got Talent. Eddie has an undeniable talent in music. I can remember walking the halls during open house and hearing in a distance a voice during a Vocal Ensemble performance. When I turned the corner, it was Eddie Moriarty singing a solo part. When he was a senior, Eddie started to set his musical dreams into motion by writing and recording his own music. Eddie also had a strong desire and commitment to serve his country. With the same fervor he applied to music, he committed himself to serving his country and these experiences have found him incredible personal growth and success. Congratulations again on your many accomplishments."

-Andrea Howarth, School Counselor, Ellington High School

BOARD CHAIR REPORT - No Report

CITIZEN & STAFF FORUM

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Allison Hadden, 14 Allen Ridge Drive, Ellington, CT 06029

Ms. Hadden addressed the Board.

CONSENT AGENDA

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1. Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting, September 27, 2023, 6:00 p.m.
2. Approval of Minutes: Special Meeting, October 10, 2023, 11:00 a.m.
3. Human Resources Monthly Report

Chair Dzen asked if anyone wished to remove any item(s) from the Consent Agenda. Chair Dzen announced that with hearing none, the Consent Agenda stands.

REPORT AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

SPECIAL REPORTS

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Update – Kindergarten Age 5 Law Implications Including PreK Programming, Ms. Alisha Carpino, Director of Finance and Operations and Ms. Sara Spak, Special Education Supervisor

Ms. Alisha Carpino, Director of Finance and Operations and Ms. Sara Spak, Special Education Supervisor

Dr. Nicol shared the challenge of the new law change to require students are five prior to September 1 for Kindergarten. He shared that it is important to understand that even with good intentions from the legislature, oftentimes changes are made without consultation with the superintendents and the public, and that affects the implementation of the new laws. In this case, this dynamic is going to put a lot of parents and districts under great strain to implement it. Alisha Carpino shared that one challenge is that there are 40-60 students on the Pre-K-Kindergarten line that will have to remain in Pre-K for an additional year and three-year-olds may not be able to enter the program due to the fact we do not have the space. Also a challenge, parents will have an additional year of financial strain to keep their students in either EPS Pre-K or another program. From the curriculum perspective, Ms. Spak shared that a new curriculum will have to be created for the 5-year-olds that have to remain in the program because we do not want those students to repeat a year of the Pre-K curriculum. We will have summer curriculum writing opportunities to re-write the current curriculum to now cover the ages three to five. Ms. Spak shared that certification is another factor, teachers may have to instruct outside of their certification areas. Ms. Carpino added that the next steps included perhaps an off-site preschool and that it is highly unlikely due to costs. Ms. Spak shared that effective communication with parents is the key, being fiscally responsible and educating parents on the changes so that they are informed of all their options moving forward is a must. Kerry Socha added that she doesn't want to see the current kids' resources being pulled to assist the unfunded kindergarten mandate implementation. Dr. Nicol responded that it is the educator's job to smoothly balance this out so that all students benefit. There was continued discussion on the topic and updates will be shared as they arise.

REGULAR BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Operations

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Kerry Socha shared that the committee met and discussed funding for a bus. They discussed the heat days and shared that Dr. Nicol attended the meeting to discuss the weather operations process for the district. Dr. Nicol shared that although the process is defined, it will always be a judgement call by the Superintendent. Another emphasis was that we need to get through another May/June before the year-long construction of Windermere School. Regardless of the heat, a new school construction will be a challenge for parents, students and teachers.

Also discussed was the use of the ARPA funds that came through the pandemic from the State. We can submit our request for the funding. The district will have to work with the town to determine if funds can be allocated to us to purchase a minibus (29-passenger van at approximately \$106,000). This can be used for Special Education transportation, field trips, and athletics. For staff, certification needs to be obtained in order to drive the bus. This includes a CDL Class C with a PS endorsement.

Ms. Socha shared that Brandon HuBrins and Anderson Rawlins presented the branding initiative to the committee and discussed the funding needed to create school spirit and cohesiveness at the high school. Banners, wraps, signs, and apparel were all discussed. The Operations Committee is recommending to the full board for approval to move forward with the initiative. Student Liaison, Noelle Krawsynski added that the new logos are great and that they hope that this will really bring school spirit out and that more students will be wearing EHS Knight apparel.

In regard to the Capital Projects, Ms. Carpino shared that Instead of proposing to the Town by project, there will be three “buckets” of money that can be rolled over if not fully spent in any given year: Vehicle replacement, equipment upgrades, and CIP Construction Projects are topics to note.

Finance

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Chair Dzen shared in Committee Chair Nord’s absence that the committee met and discussed the Mental Health Service Partnership and the use of an outside counseling service that our families can utilize, this would place a counselor in our schools for students to use, as needed. Ms. Dzen shared that there was also an Informative insurance presentation from Brown & Brown, our insurance provider.

Policy

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Policy Chair Moser shared that a positive meeting was held and new legislative policy revisions are being recommended to the Board for first reads at the November meeting.

Curriculum

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Mr. Young shared that the committee met on October 24, 2023, to discuss teacher evaluations and the new process. The committee discussed Teacher Evaluation (TEVAL). We have a pilot program this year. The focus will be on educator growth and agency for setting professional learning goals. Ellington is also seeking to connect their process more directly to teacher professional learning opportunities. An Ellington TEVAL Professional Development and Evaluation Committee (PDEC) was selected. Mr. Barton added that the last program design was from 2016. In the new system, we are focusing on professional goals aligned with the school improvement plans and allow teachers to make bolder commitments to their professional growth and collaborate with other teachers and administration all while still tracking student progress. The new process will ask the teacher for observations of how they improved their practice as well as a portfolio of evidence. Miriam Underwood shared that this is a very positive way to encourage our teachers and wanted to share accolades for starting something with a short turnaround time. She shared her support of these efforts. Angie Moser also shared that the feedback was that the teachers were very excited about the new evaluation process as there is a more growth process happening rather than waiting until the end of the year.

Communications - No Report

ADMINISTRATION REPORTS

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Superintendent’s Report - Superintendent’s Goals 2023-2024

Dr. Scott V. Nicol, Superintendent

Dr. Nicol shared a handout of the 2023 goals for review. Dr. Nicol shared highlights of his goals. Some highlights include Ellington Unplugged, Ruler, Transparency for Trust, Seeds of Civility, exploring statewide legislation, Science of Reading, and the age five Kindergarten requirements. Recommendations from the Board directly included: high school professional learning groups, and working with the Information Technology Department for teacher planning and instruction. Lastly, on the goals was Operational Effectiveness which includes: school security and shared services - ie. custodial and maintenance service, the Windermere design process, HVAC units, and 9000 series Bylaws of the Board (to be reviewed and completed). These goals were presented for review and consideration for approval at the next Board meeting in November.

Directors’ Reports

Monthly Financial Report

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Ms. Alisha Carpino, Director of Finance and Operations

Ms. Carpino shared that the current balance on the budget of \$45,083,347 is \$4,033,551.67. This includes all encumbrances, pre-encumbrances, accounts payable, and payroll through October 20, 2023.

BOARD LIAISON REPORTS

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Student Liaison, Noelle Krawsynski’s report included the following points:

1. Opening Knights Players had their first performance of the year titled 30x60
2. PSAT for Freshman - Juniors was held 10/11-10/12
3. Open House was successful for parents and students
4. Student Council hosted the Fall Dodge Ball Tournament, eight teams signed up
5. Homecoming Dance was a success with almost 500 tickets sold
6. Spirit Week - a wide range of costumes represented from Disney to the Roman Empire
7. Pumpkin Paint Night and fun Pep rally with performances from the Dance and Color Guard Teams
8. Dates to note: 11/1 last day of Q1, 11/7 Election Day, Veterans Day Assembly on 11/10

Crystal Lake School

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Liaison Miriam Underwood wanted to publicly thank CLS for the beautiful flowers received. Ms. Underwood shared that the School Store is open, the PTO meeting is on November 20, 2023, a teacher experience raffle is being held, and the Scholastic Book Fair is from November 29, 2023, to December 1, 2023. Donuts with Grown-Ups is a new event being added on November 10th and December 1st and the Holiday Shoppe dates are December 7th and December 8th.

Permanent Building Committee

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Liaison Gary Blanchette shared an update on the Windermere Building Project. The bid opening is October 31, 2023, and construction is to begin on December 10, 2023. The groundbreaking date is to be determined. The committee was happy with the turnout of contractors who expressed interest in the job.

Center School

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Liaison Kupferschmid shared that Unity Day was a great success, the school spelled the word unity in the back all dressed in orange. Trunk or Treat is scheduled for October 28th. The annual Harvest Parade will be held on October 31st at Arbor Park, the Book Fair, and Donuts with Grown-ups are all coming up on the calendar.

Ellington Middle School

Watch [HERE](#)

Liaison Kerry Socha wanted to share that the students are excited about the Washington D.C. trip. Spirit Week is also coming up.

Shared Services

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Jen Dzen shared that the committee met and will be looking at maintenance and shared services between the Town and schools, more conversation on that to come. Angie Moser and Steve Viens inquired about shared lawn services.

Ellington High School

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Liaison Moser shared that the 1st quarter is coming to an end so all parents should check in with their students and check Infinite Campus. On November 10th, the Annual Veteran's Day Celebration is being held. The event is student-driven to honor local veterans and the BOE is invited. Parent-teacher conferences are in November, and sign-ups are required. The Ellington All-Boosters club is meeting tonight, any additional support for athletics is helpful.

Windermere School

Watch [HERE](#)

Liaison Steve Viens shared that the Scholastic Book Fair and Donuts with Grow-Ups was held. A new Glo Run fundraiser was held and Principal Hill was slimed.

ACTION ITEMS

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Second read to adopt revisions to Policy 5800, Student Discipline

MOTION

First: A. Moser

Second: M. Young

To approve upon the recommendation of the Policy Committee, the Board of Education hold a second read to approve the adoption of the revisions to Policy 5800, Student Discipline.

Motion unanimously carried.

Second read to adopt revisions to Policy 4300, Employment and Student Teacher Checks

MOTION

First: M. Kupferschmid

Second: A. Moser

To approve upon the recommendation of the Policy Committee, the Board of Education hold a second read to approve the adoption of the revisions to Policy 4300, Employee and Student Teacher Checks.

Motion unanimously carried.

Second read to adopt revisions to Policy 4500, Hiring of Staff

MOTION

First: A. Moser

Second: M. Underwood

To approve upon the recommendation of the Policy Committee, the Board of Education hold a second read to approve the adoption of the revisions to Policy 4500, Hiring of Staff.

Motion unanimously carried.

Second read to adopt revisions to Policy 6147, Grade Weighting/Class Ranking

MOTION

First: M. Kupferschmid

Second: A. Moser

To approve upon the recommendation of the Policy Committee, the Board of Education hold a second read to approve the adoption of the revisions to Policy 6147, Grade Weighting/Class Ranking.

Motion unanimously carried.

Approval of the 2024 Board of Education Meeting Calendar

MOTION

First: M. Kupferschmid

Second: M. Young

To approve the 2024 Board of Education Meeting Calendar.

Motion unanimously carried.

Authorization of the Superintendent to recommend to the Town of Ellington ARPA Committee for the purchase of a mini-bus

MOTION

First: K. Socha

Second: M. Kupferschmid

To approve upon recommendation of the Operations Committee, the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent to recommend to the Town of Ellington ARPA Committee for the purchase of a mini-bus.

Motion unanimously carried.

Authorization of the Superintendent to move forward with the Ellington High School Branding Initiative and Authorize Funding using Choice and Student Activity Funds

MOTION

First: K. Socha

Second: M. Kupferschmid

To approve upon recommendation of the Operations Committee, the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent to move forward with the Ellington High School branding initiative and authorize funding using Choice and Student Activity Funds.

Motion unanimously carried.

Approval of the 5-year Capital Improvement Plan starting in 2024

MOTION

First: K. Socha

Second: M. Kupferschmid

To approve upon recommendation of the Operations Committee, the Board of Education to approve the 5-year Capital Plan for 2024-2028 emphasizing the four Capital Categories, as

presented.
Motion unanimously carried.

Approval of the Ellington Middle School Field Trip to Washington D.C.

MOTION

First: A. Moser

Second: M. Kupferschmid

To approve the Ellington Middle School Field Trip to Washington D.C., subject to the conditions as outlined in Board Policy #5150.

Motion unanimously carried.

Approval of Sarah Maltese-Brown's Unpaid Extended Child-Rearing Leave

MOTION

First: M. Kupferschmid

Second: A. Moser

To approve the requested unpaid extended child-rearing leave of Sarah Maltese-Brown, District Behavior Analyst, to commence on the completion of her FMLA, approximately March 1, 2024, and to conclude April 1, 2024.

Motion unanimously carried.

CORRESPONDENCE/ROUNDTABLE

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Chair Dzen shared that correspondence was received by Allison Hadden regarding the Ellington High School Swim Team and from Shannon Kent regarding the hot days in early September. Chair Dzen requested further updates on the swim team from Dr. Nicol and wanted to ensure this discussion is included in the budget meeting discussions.

Board Member Steve Viens asked if the recent Freedom of Information Act request has been completed. Dr. Nicol shared that it is a legal process that is still in process and the costs associated to date are approximately \$1100 to date.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION

First: K. Socha

Second: M. Young

To adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Board (7:48 p.m.)

Motion unanimously carried.

Approved