

**Board of Education  
Special Meeting  
Summer Workshop  
Conference Room B, 311 Hunting Hill Ave.  
Middletown, CT 06457  
Monday, August 12, 2024 5:00 PM**

**D R A F T**

**Board Members Present:** Liz Crooks, Sheila Daniels, Rakim Grant, Callie Grippo(via zoom at 5:23), Adam Hayn, Deborah Kleckowski (start to 6:30), Susan Owens and Harold Panciera

**Others Present:** Dr. Vázquez Matos Superintendent of Schools, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning Dr. Stacey McCann Assistant Superintendent of Operations Jennifer Cannata (5:30), Executive Assistant to the Superintendent Joyce Carey and 6 visitors.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Daniels called the meeting to order at 5:05 PM.

**II. POLICY REVIEW**

Dr. Vazquez Matos shared each policy that will be reviewed at this meeting. The State has asked for a policy banning the use of cell phones in schools. The district has done research on limiting cell phone use and has had discussions with Superintendents across the state that have a policy currently in place. Research has shown both academic and social negative effects on students to use their cell phones in class. The district has been exploring magnetic pouches for students to have their phones but not use them during the school day. The district has introduced more manipulatives and texts and print work to move away from screen time on their Chromebooks. Chair Daniels reviewed the difference between First and First and Final Readings on policies.

Dr. Vázquez Matos reviewed the Student Discipline policy. Changes are mandated by the state. He discussed many of the changes and definitions by the State. Board members discussed consistency in enforcing and the consequences outlined in the policy.

**MOTION:** A motion to edit #27 & #28 delete “on school transportation” was made by Ms. Kleckowski and a second by Mr. Hayn – unanimous vote.

Policy #4119.00 discusses a dress code for district employees. A dress code policy was requested by some district employees, leadership and union leaders.

### **III. CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE**

Dr. Vázquez Matos shared that the Common Council is reviewing the Memorandum to Bond ordinance for Macdonough School. If the Common Council passes the ordinance, it will go on the ballot for a public vote in November. The request for reimbursement from the State will be 67%. Dr. Vázquez Matos will be presenting the Macdonough project to the Common Council on August 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:00PM.

The first round of grants for the HVAC project was granted. Many of the buildings across the district are in need of HVAC repair. Flooring repair in Farm Hill and Moody is currently happening.

Dr. Vázquez Matos discussed the new housing developments in town and how that it affecting student population and possible redistricting in the near future.

### **IV. YONDR UPDATE**

Dr. Vázquez Matos shared that the Yondr pouches would be phased in. Phase One would be the Educational stage for parents, students, staff and community. Phase Two is educational and distribution. Phase Three in late November would be the full implementation. Districts that currently use pouches have seen improvements in student engagement and behaviors.

### **V. PARENT SQUARE UPDATE**

Parent Square is a communication platform that the district will use for the upcoming school year. Initial response from the communication has been positive. This supports the Strategic Operating Plan pillar 3, Communication with clarity and consistency. Schools and the district will have 2-way communication with families through texts, calls and emails. Parent feedback has been positive in the rollout of Parent Square. This will be the only app used by the district and the schools.

### **VI. BACK TO SCHOOL UPDATE**

Dr. Vázquez Matos shared that back to school is quickly approaching. Many positions are filled. The back to school fair is scheduled for Friday, August 16 at Beman Middle School. It will outside in the bus loop. We expect to have over 2000 people in attendance at the fair.

August 28<sup>th</sup> is Convocation at Middletown High School. All district employees will be in attendance.

Schools are preparing for reopening. Dr. Vazquez explained the mandated trainings for employees. The district will be using a new platform for the trainings which will streamline the system. The first day of school is August 29<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Owens asked that the district try to find a solution for more restroom access in the middle and high school.

## **VII. ACTION ITEMS**

### **VII.A. POLICY #5131.82 USE OF PRIVATELY OWNED TECHNOLOGICAL DEVICES BY STUDENTS – FIRST READING**

A motion to accept Policy #5131.82 Use of Privately Owned Technological Devices by Students – First Reading was made by Mr. Grant and a second by Ms. Crooks - unanimous vote.

### **VII.B. POLICY 5114 STUDENT DISCIPLINE – FIRST AND FINAL READING**

A motion to accept Policy #5114 Student Discipline – First and Final Reading as outline with change regarding transportation was made by Mr. Grant and a second by Ms. Crooks - unanimous vote.

### **VII.C. POLICY #4119.00 PERSONAL APPEARANCE – FIRST READING**

A motion to accept Policy #4119.00 Personal Appearance – First Reading was made by Mr. Hayn and a second by Mr. Panciera - unanimous vote.

## **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Daniels adjourned the meeting at 7:37 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Sheila Daniels

Board Chair