

Regular Board of Education Meeting – Approved Minutes
Wednesday, December 15, 2021, 7:00 p.m.
Town Hall Meeting Room

Present Board Members: Kristina Gilton, Monica Logan, Donna Nolan, David Peling, Whitney Sanzo, Sarah Thrall, Rosemarie Weber, and Tess Bajek and Jacob Scotto (Student Representatives)

Absent Board Members: N/A

Sarah Thrall called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

I. Administrative Reports

I.A. Chairman's Corner

Sarah Thrall, Board Chair, wished everyone happy holidays and welcomed Kelly Lane staff, students and parents in the audience this evening.

I.B. Superintendent's Announcements

- Dr. Grossman welcomed everyone in attendance and virtually and on Zoom this evening as well as a special welcome to Lis Diemer, Grade 2 Teacher, Courtney Piotrowski, K-5 Literacy Coach, and some Grade 2 students from Kelly Lane Primary School who were present for Schools in the Spotlight this evening.
- The Chamber Singers put on an amazing concert for our senior citizens last Friday.
- The PJ Day fundraiser was held at all of the schools last Friday and over \$2,250 was raised for Connecticut Children's Medical Center.
- Kelly Lane is collecting new mittens, hats, coats, and gently used blankets until December 21st.
- Thank you to the PTO for organizing a very successful book fair and also to all of those who volunteered for this event.
- Granby is still experiencing a shortage of bus drivers and substitute teachers. There will be an announcement going out tomorrow regarding some changes will make to try to recruit substitutes teachers. The district is also currently recruiting college students home for the break.
- The FY23 Plus One Budget will be presented on January 5th.
- There will be an early release on Wednesday, December 22nd with the break beginning on December 23rd through January 2nd.
- Copies of the new Strategic Plan is in all of the Board packets this evening. Dr. Grossman asked all Board members to please bring this document to each meeting as conversations held at Board meetings will align with the Strategic Plan.
- Dr. Grossman wished everyone Happy Holidays from his family to all of our staff, students and their families.

I.C. Assistant Superintendent's Report

Ms. Jennifer Parsons, Assistant Superintendent, provided an update on core academic areas and work currently happening. She stated it is the mid-point of the year and progress is being monitored. A benchmark test is given in the winter in ELA and Math and she stated she is curious to see how this data will compare to data from the fall. There are very positive trends in ELA and Math across the grade levels and there is a renewed commitment with Teachers College in that a Staff Developer comes in to work with each of the elementary schools 5 days per year. Ms. Parsons stated Board members will see some of this work come through in the Schools in the Spotlight presentation on Phonics this evening. She also informed the Board that a lot of the materials purchased moving forward were vetted through Teachers College. Ms. Parsons also stated it has been busy planning the transition of Grade 6 resources to align with the reading/writing model. All classrooms in K-8 are trialing a unit in Illustrative Math and Ms. Parsons stated she has received very positive feedback thus far. Grades 6-8 are in the full implementation of Illustrative Math and students are quickly mastering what they are being taught in those units. The district is grappling with some gaps from the past few years just based on learning models; however, work is being done on how to backfill some of the gaps we are seeing but what is being currently being taught is going well. Additionally, Ms. Parsons stated she is working with the Elements of Effective Instruction Framework which is tied together with equity and social/emotional learning and how it fits into the learning environment and creating positive, interactive spaces where student voices are valued and moving into work on shared outcomes which will be brought forward into the new year.

I.D. Student Representative Reports

- Tess Bajek stated the first boys' basketball game is tomorrow at Rockville and the girls will play at Simsbury.
- Boys' hockey had a jamboree and their first game is tonight as well as girls' hockey.
- The first indoor track meeting will be held on Saturday.
- Students are excited to attend basketball games in-person this year.
- Auditions for the musical *Damn Yankees* (change from *Guys & Dolls*) are happening and rehearsals will start after mid-term exams.
- Chamber Singers performed for senior citizens on Friday and it was nice to finally have an inside concert with someone other than parents in the audience.
- Chamber Singers also performed at the Wadsworth Athenaeum for the festival of trees and received a lot of nice comments from those who watched the performance.
- There is a Chorus Concert in the high school auditorium tomorrow night at 7:00 p.m.
- The Choir will be caroling at Geissler's on Saturday, December 18th, from 9 a.m.-Noon to raise money for the Granby Food Bank.
- The Leo Club Toy Drive is currently on-going. The NHS Stocking Drive will end tomorrow and 45 kids will receive stockings.
- DECA is starting to ramp up for competitions and are working on presentations.
- The Band Concert will be held on January 6th.

I.E. Schools in the Spotlight

Elisabeth Diemer, Grade 2 Teacher, and Courtney Piotrowski, K-5 Literacy Coach, provided an overview of the new Phonics Units of Study which have been implemented in Grades K-2 at Kelly Lane Primary School from the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project Curriculum. This program aligns with the current reading and writing program. Ms. Piotrowski reviewed the six foundational principles of the Phonics Units of study and Ms. Diemer reviewed the K-2 Scope and Sequence of the program including concepts about print; phonological awareness; letter knowledge; word knowledge/word solving; phonics; and high-frequency words. Ms. Piotrowski informed the Board what a phonics lesson consists of as follows: connection; teaching; active engagement; rug clubs; and, sharing. Second grade students Emma Joseph, Kellan Luke and Mason Straker showcased the skills and strategies they have learned in their phonics workshop so far this year. They showed the Board how they create words on a Jamboard through Google. Kellan also shared how snap word books work and Emma shared how the alphabet has soft and hard sounds to some of the letters. Ms. Piotrowski shared comments from K-2 teachers who are very excited about this program stating all of the things they liked. Ms. Diemer stated this presentation will also be given to parents and materials will also be sent home so parents can support their their children with phonics at home.

I. F. Business Manager's Report

Ms. Anna Robbins, Business Manager, presented the November statement of accounts and stated there is a positive forecast of \$145K which is \$16K lower than last month. Overall, special education expenditures are projected to be in the black this month. The forecast is the best information at this time through the end of the year and although out-of-district tuition is over-budget, there are savings in out-of-district transportation and special education salaries. Regular education is projected to be favorable \$145K and the driving factor continues to be turnover in personnel. The Q&D Fund is projected to be favorable at \$130K due to lower magnet school enrollment and also reflects a lower-than-budgeted enrollment for our Open Choice students. Revenues to the town are projected to be better than budgeted by \$232K. Excess cost funding from the state is projected to be slightly higher than budgeted due to a shift in out-of-district tuition projections. Rental fees reflect no rental fee income for the foreseeable future and pay-for-participation fees are on target. The athletic program is expected to proceed as normal. Rosemarie Weber stated the Finance Subcommittee reviewed and accepted the report this evening.

II. Public Comment

There were no public comments this evening.

III. Consent Agenda

III.A. Minutes

A motion was made by Rosemarie Weber and seconded by David Peling to adopt the consent agenda. This motion passed unanimously at 7:51 p.m.

V. New Business

V.A. FY23 Budget Timeline

Dr. Grossman presented the FY23 Budget Timeline to the Board and stated things start rolling with the budget beginning September 30th. He stated the timeline presented sets forth for the Board steps on creating the budget. On January 5th, Dr. Grossman stated he will present the Plus One Budget. This is not the final budget; however, it is where the budget lies on January 5th based upon the administrative and teacher proposals presented to him. Dr. Grossman stated the Plus One Budget does not show everything that was presented – only those items moving forward. He stated the number could be higher than the BOF guideline of 2.25% which may or may not move. The Plus One Budget is presented in memo form. Dr. Grossman stated he will ask that evening for Board members to write down any questions and those questions will be reviewed at the next Board Meeting on January 19th. Also at that meeting, the Board will decide if the Plus One Budget is accepted as-is or if the Superintendent will need to change it. Thereafter, the Plus One Budget is forwarded on to the BOF. The FY23 Administrative Budget is then presented to the Board on March 2nd and Dr. Grossman stated he cannot state if the budget percentage at that point will be higher or lower than the Plus One Budget. After a Budget Workshop on March 9th, the Board will make a decision to accept the budget at the next regular meeting on March 16th and, at that point, the budget becomes the FY23 Board of Education Budget and is forwarded on to the BOF.

V.B. First Reading of Revised Policy 3542.43 - Food Service

The Curriculum/Policy/Technology/Communications Subcommittee recommended revised Policy 3542.43, Food Service, to the Board for a first reading. Jennifer Parsons stated this policy reflects changes in suggested state legislation language. This policy updates the previous policy and provides that if a student does not have paperwork on file to qualify for free and reduced lunch, he/she will be given the same meal as all students even if there is an outstanding balance. Any comments/changes on this policy should be forwarded to Ms. Parsons. This policy will go to the Board for a second reading and approval at the next meeting.

V.C. First Reading of Revised Policy 4118.11/4218.11 - Personnel Nondiscrimination

The Curriculum/Policy/Technology/Communications Subcommittee recommended revised Policy 4118.11/4218.11, Personnel Nondiscrimination, to the Board for a first reading. Jennifer Parsons stated this policy includes a statement of nondiscrimination practices and specifically calls inclusivity of ethnic traits historically associated with race including, but not limited to, hair texture and protective hairstyles. Any comments/changes on this policy should be forwarded to Ms. Parsons. This policy will go to the Board for a second reading and approval at the next meeting.

V.D. First Reading of Revised Policy 4212.42 - Drug and Alcohol Testing for School Bus Drivers

The Curriculum/Policy/Technology/Communications Subcommittee recommended revised Policy 4212.42, Drug and Alcohol Testing for Bus Drivers, to the Board for first reading. Jennifer Parsons stated this policy has been updated to reflect a required legal change making sure bus drivers clear all drug and alcohol screenings in addition to emergency training. Any comments/changes on this policy should be forwarded to Ms. Parsons. This policy will go to the Board for a second reading and approval at the next meeting.

VI. Miscellaneous

VI.A. Board Standing Committee Reports

VI.A.1. Curriculum/Policy/Technology/Communication

This Subcommittee has not met.

VI.A.2. Finance/Personnel/Facilities

Rosemarie Weber stated this Subcommittee met this evening and she thanked Anna Robbins for educating new Board members on how to read and understand the statement of accounts. Also discussed a substitute teacher incentivization plan as well as fee structures in the district to include pre-k tuition, pay-for-participation and rental and custodial event fees. The Subcommittee decided all fees will remain status quo based on where the district is financially as well as the times families are living in currently. Additionally, transportation issues were discussed. The bus contract is coming up and administration is determining the best course of action to take in terms of getting an extension. More information to follow. Lastly, a Family Engagement Specialist for community outreach was discussed which is a great benefit not only to Open Choice families but to the Granby community as a whole.

VI.B. Other Board-Related Reports

VI.B.1. CREC/CABE

Sarah Thrall stated no one has attended a CREC meeting.

VI.B.2. Granby Education Foundation

Whitney Sanzo stated the next meeting for the Granby Education Foundation will be held on Monday, December 20th.

VI.C. Calendar of Events

Sarah Thrall stated to please support our students. There is a Three-Board Meeting on January 18th at the Senior Center at 7:00 pm. and all Board members are encouraged to attend.

VI.D. Board Member Announcements

Monica Logan stated she attended her first Granby Equity Team (GET) Meeting and stated it was a wonderful experience. GET discussed the celebration of various holidays and concerns of celebrating Black history month for one month only, as an example, and that there should be a focus on diverse curriculum throughout the school year.

VI.E. Action Items

1) Board members should get any questions or comments on the revised policies to Jennifer Parsons prior to the next meeting.

VII. Executive Session/Non-Meeting

A motion was made by Donna Nolan and seconded by Monica Logan to enter into an Executive Session to discuss a collective bargaining agreement. This motion passed unanimously at 8:13 p.m.

The Executive Session adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Nolan
Board Secretary