

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR WOODBRIDGE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

Monday, June 21, 2021

Via WebEx <https://woodbridgeps.webex.com/woodbridgeps/j.php?MTID=m86f17e043e24a14cf59ff11734850b1c>

Meeting Number: 146 526 1748

Meeting Password: mTbEKaFd245

CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Piascyk, Chair called the meeting to order (7:02 PM).

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Lynn Piascyk, Chair; Mr. Daniel Cowan, Ms. Lor Ferrante Fernandes, Ms. Maegan Genovese, Secretary; Mr. Jeff Hughes, Dr. David Ross, Ms. Joyce Shavers, Vice Chair; Dr. Michael Strambler and Dr. Jeffrey Townsend.

STAFF: Dr. Jonathan Budd, Superintendent; Cheryl Kiesel, Special Services Director; Al Pullo, Director of Business Operations/Services; Analisa Sherman, Principal; Doreen Merrill, Assistant Principal and Marsha DeGennaro, Clerk of the Board.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: Joi Prud'homme, PTO (Caller 4); Sandy Stein, BOS Liaison; Christine Campbell, Melissa Caporossi, James Crawford, Christa Demetro, Joe DePalma, Carrie Fanelli, Lisa Farnen, Kim Franklin, Jeannette Glennon, Janine Lempke, Katie McCollom, Tim Rourke, Meghan Saunders, Harley Ventura, Mary Vincitorio, Sarah Wislocki, Teachers; Jennifer Cooper, Kit Dunbar, Shari Foldy, Wendy Glynn, CSEA; Lola Johnson, CILU; Vito Esparo, Facilities Manager; Paolo Campos, Jordan Chen, Jay Dahya, Sarah DelPrete, Pua Ford, Kelly Halstead, Brooke Hopkins, Ruchi Jain, Jeffrey Luck, Maria Madonick, Dr. Shannon Martinello, RQ, Whitney Randall, Dr. Mohini Ranganathan, Jane Roddy, James Sapia, Erin Williamson, Call-In Users 3, 4, 5, 7, 12037, CAPSS recipients / family members, community.

CORRESPONDENCE – Ms. Genovese noted that the Board received a letter from a community member regarding the wearing of masks in the coming school year.

It was suggested that the correspondence be addressed by the Board under New Business later in the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION #1 – CONSENT AGENDA

Move that we approve the consent agenda as presented.

Ms. Shavers

Second by Dr. Strambler

UNANIMOUS

REPORTS

CAPSS Student Recognition – Superintendent Budd recognized Carys Campos, Jordan Chen, Kate Hopkins, Margaret Kershner, Margaret Maloney, Aditya Narayan and Victoria Pelton as the 2021 Grade 6 recipients of the CAPSS Award. This Award recognizes community service and service to others; academic prowess (relative to ability); and leadership to the school community

Board Member Recognition – Sincere thanks were extended to Daniel Cowan, Maegan Genovese, Lor Ferrante Fernandes and Dr. Jeffrey Townsend for their service to the Board of Education and the BRS/Woodbridge community.

PTO Report – Ms. Prud'homme acknowledged the 6th grade graduation with students receiving their yearbook, a book bag, lawn sign, t-shirt and key chain and celebrated with ice cream and pizza. The direct giving drive raised approximately \$8,500 with the PTO matching the donations for a total of \$17,000. The Artsweek virtual tour is available and PTO officers for the coming year were announced: Joi Prud'homme – President, Cara Rosner – Vice President, Sumithra Sudhir / Maria Madonick – Co-Treasurers, Jennifer Gelband / Hillary Drumm - Communications Co-Chairs, Stephanie Jacobson / Erin Oleskey – Co-Chairs Service, Kristy Laydon - Fund Raising, Ruchi Jain – Enrichment with position openings for Secretary and Community Support.

Superintendent Report – Superintendent Budd recognized the passing of staff member Nicole Silva, reconciliation of the 2021/22 budget, acknowledgment of the successful completion of in-person instruction for the 2020/21 school year and announced the 2021/22 Teacher of the Year - Joseph DePalma. Mr. DePalma extended a sincere thank you to all for the honor.

Celebration of BRS – Superintendent Budd, Ms. Sherman, Dr. Mohini Ranganathan, Maria DePalma and Katie McCollom, presented highlights of the past school year with the entire BRS community working together in shared goals through this remarkable and challenging year.

Wellness Report – The Board received an annual update as well as health and safety mitigation strategies specific to Covid 19 inclusive of universal and correct wearing of masks, physical distancing, handwashing / respiratory etiquette, cleaning and maintaining a healthy facility, contact tracing / isolation / quarantine, diagnostic screening and testing, vaccination for eligible individuals and appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities. Dr. Martinello, School Medical Advisor, reminded everyone that our students are not currently eligible for vaccination so mitigation strategies are important.

Return to In-person Learning and Continuity of Services Plan – Based on current CSDE guidelines, all students of the Woodbridge School District will participate in full in-person learning for the 2021/22 school, with limited exception of those who must quarantine due to Covid exposure and those with documented accommodations preventing in-person access to learning. Public input on the Plan was accomplished by a Google forms survey and an open virtual forum. Approximately 50 staff members as well as 60 non-committing members participated in providing information and feedback. We will continue to comply with relevant CDC guidelines, Connecticut DPH / CSDE guidelines as well as applicable Executive Orders. Implementation of our health and safety strategies / protocols will also continue and will be reviewed and revised accordingly. It is anticipated that, based on current information, masks will continue to be part of our mitigation strategies for in-person learning in the fall. It was suggested that remote options should remain viable and that perhaps consideration should be given to create a hybrid model to meet the needs of all students. It may also be helpful to have clear information and/or data on what the thresholds may or may not be. It was also noted that all parents have the option of “home schooling”.

BRS Report – Ms. Sherman highlighted the flexibility and creativity of staff in their end-of-year activities including animal museums, dance parties, field day, 6th grade graduation, special Olympic activities, availability of summer reading and math packets on the web site and acknowledged Nicole Silva.

Facilities Committee – Mr. Hughes thanked Lor, Dan and Maegan for their service and reviewed the June 11 meeting. Mr. Hughes toured BRS on June 15 and overall the facility is in good shape. Monitoring of systems will continue over the summer.

Finance Committee – Ms. Shavers reviewed the June 14 meeting noting the \$30,000 surplus, the loss of \$94,000 in the EDay program with additional unemployment claims in the range of \$7,000 still to be incurred. It is anticipated the District will receive approximately \$460,000 in ESSER funding. With approval of the 2021/22 budget at the annual Town meeting, we are able to make adjustments.

MOTION #2 – 2021/22 BUDGET RECONCILIATION / LINE ITEM TRANSFERS

Move that we reconcile the 2021/22 budget and approve the line item budget transfers as presented by administration.

Ms. Shavers

Second by Ms. Ferrante Fernandes

UNANIMOUS

Curriculum Committee – Dr. Strambler reviewed the May 20 meeting which focused on absenteeism / truancy data and summer curriculum development plans.

Policy Committee – Ms. Genovese noted the changes in Policy 5113 that was approved on the Consent Agenda and presented the policies for adoption.

MOTION #3 – POLICY ADOPTION

Move that we adopt Policies 5114 - Suspension & Expulsion / Due Process, 3170 - Extended School Day and Extended School Year Programs, 2120 - Organizational Chart, 1110 - Communications among the Board of Education, the Administration, the Parents and the Staff at BRS and 9132 - Standing Committees as revised.

Ms. Genovese
Second by Ms. Shavers
UNANIMOUS

Ad Hoc Student Culture and Committee Report – Dr. Strambler updated the Board on the work of this committee which was halted due to Covid and subsequently renamed. This initial meeting was a brain-storming session to determine what the focus of the committee work will be over the next year. It is anticipated that the Committee will present their findings to the full Board in January 2022. Short-term goals include supporting students as they return to school in the fall ensuring that they feel safe, welcomed, and emotionally supported by staff; finding and providing professional development that will support that and other strategies that are put in place. It is anticipated there will be significant challenges during that process. The long term goals are a little murky. When the committee was originally established there were behavioral and disciplinary incidents occurring in classrooms and that has dipped since in Covid. It remains unknown what that will look like when kids return in the fall. The committee is also looking at potential strategies / policies that might be developed and/or adopted to address some of those broader concerns with the behavioral incidents.

CABE Liaison Report – Ms. Genovese encouraged Board member to save the date of August 5 for the annual Leadership Conference which is being held in-person at Waters Edge in Westbrook from 1:30 – 7:15. There is a webinar on updated legislation / policy implications tomorrow (6/22/2021).

NEW BUSINESS

Superintendent Budd presented the retirement of the Director of Business Services / Operations after serving in that capacity for 11 years.

MOTION #4 –RETIREMENT OF DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS SERVICES / OPERATIONS (PULLO)

Move that we accept the retirement of Al Pullo effective July 7, 2021 with regret.

Mr. Cowan
Second by Ms. Ferrante Fernandes
UNANIMOUS

Accept Certified Staff Resignation – Superintendent Budd presented the resignation of James Crawford, Technology Teacher, who has taught at BRS for 17 years.

MOTION #5 –CERTIFIED STAFF RESIGNATION (CRAWFORD)

Move that we accept the resignation of James Crawford effective June 21, 2021 with regret.

Ms. Shavers
Second by Mr. Cowan
UNANIMOUS

Superintendent Contract Extension – Chair Piascyk reminded the Board that the CSDE requires a three-year contract for Superintendents. As Dr. Budd was hired on December 14, 2020, it was recommended that his contract be extended to June 30, 2024 for consistency purposes.

MOTION #6 – SUPERINTENDENT CONTRACT EXTENSION (BUDD)

Move that we extend the contract of the Superintendent through June 30, 2024.

Ms. Shavers
Second by Dr. Townsend
UNANIMOUS

Discussion occurred on whether to add to New Business a response from the parent requesting information / guidance on when the district will begin to relax on masking mandates. It was suggested that the parent contact the CSDE and/or Governor's office as the Board is not able to take action without action from them first. It was agreed that this item would not be added to New Business for action.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Erin Williamson wished to clarify that the Diversity Committee was not politically affiliated. The goal of the Committee is to create an environment that all children feel safe and welcomed in and that they know they have a home at BRS. Teachers and administrators know how to successfully address issues in an appropriate manner that respects all children and all cultures. She hoped that all Board members, regardless of their political affiliation, would continue to build a school and community environment where all children feel safe and welcomed.

MOTION TO ADJOURN: (10:08 PM)

Dr. Ross

Second by Dr. Townsend

UNANIMOUS

Recorded by Marsha DeGennaro, Clerk of the Board