

Regular Board of Education Meeting – Approved Minutes
Wednesday, September 18, 2024, 7:00 p.m.
Town Hall Meeting Room

Present Board Members: Liz Barlow, Heather Lombardo, Monica Logan, Donna Nolan, Karen Richmond-Godard, Ali Zafar, and Katie O’Neill and Sofia Brenson (Student Representatives)

Absent Board Members: David Peling

I. Call to Order and Welcome

Board Chair, Monica Logan, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone in attendance as well as online this evening.

II. Chairperson’s Report

Monica Logan welcomed new student representative Sofia Brenson, read a short bio about her and stated she applied to be on the Board to improve her public speaking skills. Ms. Logan thanked Sofia for joining the Board.

III. Awards and Recognition

Board Chair, Monica Logan, recognized Meg Jabaily for her contributions to the school community. Ms. Jabaily, a Granby parent and Vice Chair of the Granby Town Center Study, worked with small groups of students in Pre-Kindergarten, Grade 3 and Grade 7 in classroom-based workshops to teach the process of design thinking and integrated the students’ creative ideas and problem solving into the work of the Town Center Study. Third grade students used what they learned about ideation within the design thinking process to brainstorm how they could redesign the courtyard at Wells Road. They culminated their work for the year by planting a new tree in the center of the courtyard that will be a focal point and source of shade and beauty for years to come.

IV. District Threat Assessment Protocols

Superintendent Burke in collaboration with Police Chief, Scott Sansom, reviewed established district threat assessment protocols with the Board and shared ongoing work behind the scenes related to protocol and procedures in light of a threat. Superintendent Burke stated there is an increase in threatening language across many schools in the State of Connecticut. Granby Public Schools works in concert with the Police Department for prevention and best practices to prepare for potential emergencies. She spoke about the Emergency Planning Meetings which take place quarterly in the district and involve members from the FVHD, Police Department, Ambulance Association, and Emergency Management. She stated, Policy 5141.6, which is available on the district’s on-line policy manual speaks about prevention, preparation, responding and reflecting around emergencies and she reviewed each component describing what types of actions fall under each heading. Additionally, Superintendent Burke shared information regarding the STOPit app available to students and parents as well as what entails responding to a threat assessment and what is involved with regard to investigation on the school side. With regard to communication regarding an incident, she stated that communication is not the first priority and that initial communication will be basic and always less than parents prefer. She stated communications must be correct, timely and lawful. Chief Sansom spoke about procedures the Police Department takes when there is a threat and that all threats must be investigated. He also spoke about the role of the Police Department, specifically, in the most recent incident that occurred. He shared that he is not in favor of police officers in schools; however, is in favor of a School Resource Officer program as they become an asset to the school and students. Lastly, Superintendent Burke shared guidelines for parents providing Dos and Don’ts in emergency situations and she also reminded parents to ensure that they are signed up for SchoolMessenger texts.

V. Public Comment

Mike Kramarenko, Notch Road, Granby, CT, stated he has still not received answers regarding a questionnaire given to students at the high school. He shared details he has heard about an incident at school and characteristics of the student allegedly involved. He also stated that bullying in the district is swept under the rug; national book ban week is in October - why are certain books in our libraries; with regard to the cell phone policy, he stated that his step-daughter will always have her cell phone on her person and the district will receive this in writing; and, lastly, he stated the district is trying to hide important communications.

Susan Regan, Hungary Road in Granby, inquired if the protocol presented tonight was already established. She also expressed her concern that the district is hiding incidents and that details of students involved in incidents should be released and, if not, why? Can this information be released from the Police Department?

VI. Student Representative Reports

- Sofia Brenson stated there has been a lot going on at the high school since school started including Open House which was held last week.
- Drama rehearsals for *The Twisted Tales of Poe* have begun as well as tryouts for jazz band and chamber singers.
- There was an informational meeting regarding the French Exchange Program on September 18th.
- Senior planning meetings will be held on September 19th during PLC and a virtual meeting in the evening
- On October 1st there will be an all-grade meeting for student success held by Mrs. Petersen in the College & Career Center.
- A blood drive will be held on October 11th in the Community Gym sponsored by the Red Cross.
- The volleyball team will host a country line dancing fundraiser on October 11th from 6:30-9:30 pm in the Community Gym.
- Sports report: Volleyball won their game tonight vs. Rockville; boys' soccer played East Granby away and have a home game vs. Canton on Friday night; girls' soccer beat East Granby at home 7-0; field hockey played under the lights this week and beat Somers 8-1; football has a big game vs. Coventry on Friday night; and cross country had a meet on Tuesday vs. Coventry/East Granby/Somers,

VII. Business Requiring Action

A. Minutes

A motion was made by Heather Lombardo and seconded by Karen Richmond Godard that the Granby Board of Education approve the minutes from the August 13, 2024 Board of Education Retreat. This motion passed with two abstentions (Donna Nolan and Ali Zafar) at 7:59 p.m. A motion was made by Heather Lombardo and seconded by Karen Richmond Godard that the Granby Board of Education approve the minutes from the September 4, 2024 Board of Education Meeting. This motion passed unanimously at 8:00 p.m.

B. Second Reading and Approval of New Policy 3171.1 - Non-Lapsing Education Fund

The Curriculum/Policy/Technology/Communications Subcommittee recommended new Policy 3171.1, Non-Lapsing Education Fund, to the Board for a second reading and approval. A motion was made by Donna Nolan and seconded by Heather Lombardo that the Granby Board of Education adopt Policy 3171.1, Non-Lapsing Education Fund, as recommended by the Curriculum/Policy/Technology/Communications Subcommittee. Donna Nolan stated this policy was discussed this evening at the Finance Subcommittee Meeting as well as with other town boards and there are no objections to this policy. This motion passed unanimously at 8:01 p.m.

VIII. Reports and Discussion

A. Director of Finance & Operations Report / FY24 Year-End Budget Transfers

Ms. Nickie Stevenson, Director of Operations & Finance, presented the FY24 Year-End Update to the Board stating the FY24 ended on a positive note with \$235K in unexpended funds. Ms. Stevenson explained that in the general fund there are approximately over 600 accounts. At the end of the year, transfers are made from the positive accounts to balance the negative accounts and as a formality the Board must approve for funds to be transferred from those accounts with positive balances to alleviate negative balances in others. Ms. Stevenson went on to state that the Quality & Diversity Fund ended with a positive balance of \$95K and revenue to the town was positive with over \$2.2M in revenue from various sources such as tuition from other towns, pay-for-participation fees and the State Excess Cost Granby. With the approval of the Non-Lapsing Education Fund Policy this evening, it is requested that \$200K be returned to the town and \$35,269.86 be deposited into this account. Donna Nolan stated the Finance Subcommittee reviewed this report and approved it this evening. A motion was made by Donna Nolan and seconded by Karen Richmond-Godard that the Granby Board of Education approve the FY24 year-end budget transfers as recommended by the Director of Finance & Operations and Finance/Personnel/Facilities Subcommittee. This motion passed unanimously at 8:04 p.m.

B. Summative Testing Report

Ms. Jennifer Parsons, Assistant Superintendent, shared summative testing results with the Board stating these assessments include Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), CT School Day SAT and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Ms. Parsons shared that the School Day SAT was redesigned in 2016 from an aptitude test to an achievement test and students receive scores in Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (ERW) as well as

Math. Proficiency benchmarks are set by the State at 480 in ERW and 580 in Math. Ms. Parsons explained the Demographic Reference Groups (DRG) stating all towns were re-evaluated with like towns being grouped with regard to income, education, occupation, family structure, etc. and Granby moved from DRG B to DRG C. The average SAT score in Granby was 562 and was significantly higher than the state average with Granby placing 3rd in the DRG. She shared the Math score average was 526 which is down from the previous administration and Granby placed 4th in the DRG. Next steps for SAT are to analyze results of the shift in math programming and provide intervention strategies for students not yet hitting proficiency.

With regard to SBAC, Ms. Parsons stated students at Wells Road and GMMS participate in this test and all sections are administered electronically. Students receive a scaled score between 2000 and 3000 which can be used as a ruler to measure progress over time. Scaled scores are broken down to proficiency Levels 1, 2, 3, and 4. In 2024, 66% of students in Grades 3-8 were proficient in ELA and three grade levels (4th, 5th and 7th) scored above 70% proficiency. There is a need to analyze scores for students in transition grades. Ms. Parsons shared that Granby scores are significantly higher than the state average of 49% but that Granby fell to 6th in the DRG. In Math 54% of students moved in a positive direction making Granby 20 out of 28 and 9th in the DRG group. There was 22% growth in 7th grade and maintenance of 65% in 8th grade.

Ms. Parsons went on to share that NGSS is administered to students in Grades 5, 8 and 11 and stated there is a high level of literacy built into this assessment as well as science concepts. Granby students historically score high on this test and have the 3rd highest scores in the DRG overall.

Ms. Parsons concluded by stating there is room for continued improvement especially in the area of mathematics when comparing the 2024 proficiency levels on summative state assessments to the Superintendent's goals of 80% in ELA and Science and 70% in Math. She shared that work will be done with staff to connect instructional practices to the new teacher evaluation model. Additionally, student level data will be analyzed in professional meetings using a new analytics tool, EduClimber. These practices are aimed to improve achievement overall. Ms. Parsons also added the engagement of a secondary scheduling study to maximize instructional minutes within the day and design student support structures at the middle and high school level where there are a lot of competing courses for students.

C. First Reading of Revised Policy 3541 - Transportation

The Curriculum/Policy/Technology/Communications Subcommittee recommended revised Policy 3541, Transportation, to the Board for a first reading. Jennifer Parsons stated there were minor changes to the policy. This policy will go to the board for a second reading and approval at the next meeting.

D. First Reading of Revised Policy 6146 - Graduation Requirements

The Curriculum/Policy/Technology/Communications Subcommittee recommended revised Policy 6146, Graduation Requirements, to the Board for a first reading. This policy is being revised due to a change in special education law that a child be educated through their 22nd birthday.

IX. Committee Reports

A. Board Standing Committee Reports

1. Curriculum/Policy/Technology/Communication

This subcommittee did not meet. Approved minutes are in the board packet.

2. Finance/Personnel/Facilities

Donna Nolan reported this subcommittee met this evening to discuss the Non-Lapsing Education Fund policy as well as changes in presenting finance reports. Also discussed the Finance Subcommittee getting more involved in bussing and food services contracts. Additionally, the subcommittee was advised that interviews have begun for a new Director of Facilities.

B. Other Board-Related Reports

1. CREC/CABE

Monica Logan stated the Board is still looking for someone to attend the CREC/CABE meetings. The Board is unable to qualify for the CABE Leadership Award this year due to the lack of Board representation and engagement at CABE.

2. Granby Education Foundation

Liz Barlow stated that the GEF met on Monday evening and they are starting to receive questions about possible grants and hoping to receive proposals. The GEF is actively recruiting new board members so if you are interested, contact info@granbyeducationfoundation.org. Additionally, a tentative date of April 25th has been set for the GranBee.

C. Calendar of Events

Monica Logan stated the calendar of events is attached in the packet.

D. Board Member Announcements

There were no Board member announcements this evening.

E. Action Items

There were no action items this evening.

X. Superintendent's Report

- Thank you to the GEA for hosting a pizza tailgate before tonight's meeting. It was wonderful to connect with our hard-working teachers. The Board appreciated the opportunity to get to know teachers on a personal level.
- The high school's new Assistant Principal, Dr. Hannah Dill, will start on October 7th. Dr. Dill currently works at a middle school in Somers and was previously a Social Studies Teacher. She has awesome energy and a wealth of knowledge to bring to the position.
- Currently holding interviews for the Director of Facilities position.
- The middle school and high school held their open houses last week which were well attended. Wells Road Curriculum Night is being held this week and Kelly Lane Curriculum Night is next week.
- There will be a middle school PAC Meeting this Friday at 9:00 a.m.
- The first early release for professional development will be on September 25th.
- There will be no school for two upcoming holidays on October 3rd and October 14th. Due to the holiday on October 3rd. There will be no Board Meeting on October 2nd.
- PTO will hold their first two meetings of the year on October 2nd at 6 p.m. at Kelly Lane and on November 7th at Wells Road.
- Superintendent Burke described the challenges of unfunded mandates and legislative decisions that impact our schools. Next week she will partner with area superintendents to have a small group conversation with State Representative Tammy Zawistowski and Senator John Kissel to advocate for some of the educational issues important to smaller districts such as funding for special education and funding to towns.
- Superintendent Burke requested permission from the Board Chair to address comments made during Public Comment this evening as an opportunity to stress the importance of HIPAA and school confidentiality laws as well as the importance of protecting each and every member of our school district by not describing students by their town of residence or behaviors. She stated it is of the utmost importance that she is the protector for students and teachers and that she is available for calls, emails, or knocks on her door. Using the podium at a public meeting does not become part of the solution and she would rather be part of the solution. She went on to state when a platform is used to speak truth, which in fact is riddled with inaccuracy, it unfairly harms children. Zero police reports were confirmed or validated over the past week and no child was arrested and no child harmed someone with criminal intent or hospitalization. These statements can be fact-checked because the police record is public record. Adults need to be models and positive examples for our students. This is not a school issue – it is a community issue. Until we are willing to put these differences aside and admit a mistake was made, we will not be better. Superintendent Burke stated she will stand up for every child in our school district and false information cannot skew the perception of a really fabulous place.

XI. Adjournment

A motion was made by Donna Nolan and seconded by Heather Lombardo that the Granby Board of Education adjourn the Board of Education Meeting. This motion passed unanimously at 8:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Elizabeth H. Barlow
Board Secretary